# ŚAKTI CULT IN ANCIENT INDIA

(With Special reference to the Purāṇic literature)

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M.A. Ph.D., F.R.A.S. (London)

BHARTIYA PUBLISHING HOUSE
VARANASI
1974

Published by : BHARTIYA PUBLISHING HOUSE
B. 9/45, Sonarpura, Varanasi



*Printed By*
Amar Printing Press, (Sham Printing Agency),
8/25, Vijay Nagar, (Double Storey), Delhi-9.

Dedicated

to

the loving memory of my mother,
a visible manifestation of that Parāśakti

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु मातृरूपेण संस्थिता ।
नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

## FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in introducing to the world of scholars the valuable work *Śakti Cult in Ancient India* by my pupil and colleague Dr. Pushpendra Kumar Sharma. It represents essentially the dissertation approved in 1967 under the slightly different title *Śakti Cult in the Purāṇas* for the degree of Ph. D. of the University of Delhi. Since 1967 Dr. Sharma has been working on the cult of Tārā, the Buddhist deity. He has spent a couple of years in London and has worked under the able guidance of Professor J. Burton Page. His study is now almost complete and should see the light of the day before long.

Dr. Sharma has by now about a decade's study of the Śakti Cult. He has gone through in depth the relevant literature on it. His observations are therefore well-informed and conclusions well-drawn.

The origin of the Śakti Cult in India is shrouded in mystery. Scholars have put forward various theories to explain it. But no consensus has emerged as yet. Whatever the time of origin the fact remains that the worship of Śakti, the female deities, has been an important constituent of the Hindu social fabric. For centuries and millenia have these deities been worshipped. These have provided solace to the afflicted mind of the devout who have through worship sought communion with them.

Śakti, as the very word itself denotes, means power. It can be seen through the different phenomena of life itself. As the Devī Sūkta in the *Saptaśatī* records even such abstract things as Intelligence (Buddhi), Satiifaction (Tuṣ i), Pity and Clemency (Dayā) etc. are the various forms of the Śakti—*yā devī sarvabhūteṣu buddhirūpeṇa saṁsthitā namas tasyai* etc. Each one is power, Śakti, including illusion (Bhrānti), which is a manifestation of the Supreme Power, the Parā Śakti. Hence the multiplicity of

the goddesses representing as they do the different phenomena e.g., Sarasvatī representing learning, Lakṣmī representing wealth and so on. These also represent sometimes the different aspects, Durgā the benign aspect, Kālī the terrible aspect, and so on. Each god of the Hindu pantheon has a power through which he operates. The power carries much the same characteristics as the god possessing it. It is logical, therefore, that the powers should come to be known by the gods who possess them. We have as a result the Vaiṣṇavī Śaktis, like Durgā or Raudrī Śaktis like Kālī. The three principal deities of the Hindu religion Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa have each a well-defined function of creation, sustenance and destruction respectively. Their Śaktis also have precisely these very functions. It is a moot point to consider now as to why the worship of Śaktis should have come into vogue for, the purpose for which they were worshipped was or could verily be achieved by worshipping the gods who possessed them. The answer to this is not at all difficult. In the choice between the worship of the power and the possessor of the power, (irrespective of the power and its possessor being identical) it was natural for the human mind to veer round the power, the power that lay behind even the gods. It is no wonder therefore that in certain periods of Indian history and in certain regions particularly, the worship of Śakti, the female deities, far surpassed that of the male deities.

The common belief in the principle of power led to the thinking that even the normal undisturbed life was due to some power which kept vigil over it and which had to be propitiated to keep things going. The result : There appeared in legion, the presiding deities, the Adhiṣṭhātṛdevatās of every village, city or town or country. Hence the worship of some deities in some particular region only. Not only villages, cities or countries, even forests, trees or rivers were deified and came to be worshipped.

It is natural for the human being to want to possess what he does not. If he feels his Iṣṭadevatā can bestow it on him he will approach him or her for it. He is shrewd enough to know that his praises and worship will please him or her and make

him yield his desires. There is some sort of exchange between the Bhakta and his Iṣṭa, the give and take, as the *Saptaśatī* clearly points out :

*dadāti pratigṛhṇāti nānyathaiṣā prasīdati*

As has been said earlier the deities have two aspects, the benign and the terrible. Even these aspects have to be viewed in different forms depending upon the nature of the desire of the worshipper. This results in the appearance of the different forms of the deities in one and the same aspect. Hence the forms Durgā, Mahālakṣmī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Lalitā etc. in the benign aspect and Bhairavī, Kālī, Chinnamastā, Bagalāmukhī etc. in the terrible aspect.

It is peculiar to the Hindu mind to go into the minute and the smallest details of everything. It is apiece with it that elaborate ritual is laid down with regard to the worship of each deity.

A study of the Śakti cult or the worship of the female deities presupposes an intimate knowledge of this ritual as also the places of worship and the literature connected with it. Happily Dr. Pushpendra Kumar Sharma possesses this knowledge in an ample measure. The study that he has produced is well done. Since the work had to be seen through the press according to a tight schedule the proofs could not be gone through as minutely as they should have been with the result that quite a few printing errors have crept in. These, it is hoped, will be glossed over by the indulgent reader.

I hope scholars interested in the Śakti Cult will find the present monograph quite useful and instructive. I also hope that it will be followed shortly by other similar works by Dr. Sharma .

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'Surabhi'
3/54, Roop Nagar,
Delhi—7.
10.5.1974.

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*[illegible]*

As has been said earlier, the deities have two aspects, the benign and the terrible. Even their worship has to be viewed [illegible] these determine upon the nature of the deity of the [illegible]. This results in the importance of the different forms of the deities, one and the same aspect. Hence the forms [illegible], Bhuvaneshvari, Lalita etc. in the [illegible] and [illegible], Kali, Chamunda, [illegible] etc. in the [illegible] aspect.

It is [illegible] for the Hindu mind to go into the minute and the minutest details of everything. It is [illegible] with it that [illegible] is laid down with regard to the worship of each [illegible].

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I hope scholars interested in the [illegible] will find the [illegible] thorough, authoritative and [illegible]. I also hope that it will be followed shortly by other similar works by Dr. [illegible].

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## ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Av. | Atharvaveda. |
| 2. | Rv. | Ṛgveda |
| 3. | Mbh. | Mahābhārata |
| 4. | Rm. | Rāmāyaṇa |
| 5. | Dbh.; Devī Bh. | Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa |
| 6. | Devī P. | Devī Purāṇa |
| 7. | Kālikā P. | Kālikā Purāṇa |
| 8. | P. | Purāṇa |
| 9. | Dm. or Devī. M. | Devī Māhātmya of Mārkaṇ ̣eya Purā ̣a |
| 10. | Up. | Upaniṣad |
| 11. | Bh. | Bhāgavata Purāṇa |
| 12. | Śākta Purā ̣as | Purāṇas dealing with Śakti worship |
| 13. | Brahma V.P. or Brahma Vai. P. | Brahma Vaivarta Purā ̣a |
| 13. | H. I. I. | History of Indian and Indonesian art. |
| 14. | Kh. | Khaṇḍa |

## TRANSLITERATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Ṛ ṛ | (ऋ) |
| 2. | Ṇ ṇ | (ण) |
| 3. | Ś | (श) |
| 4. | Ṣ | (ष) |
| 5. | ṭ | (ट) |
| 6. | ṭh | (ठ) |
| 7. | ā | (आ) |
| 8. | ī | (ई) |
| 9. | ū | (ऊ) |
| 10. | c, ch; | (च) |
| 11. | ch chh; | (छ) |
| 12. | ḍ | (ड) |
| 13. | ḍh | (ढ) |
| 14. | ṅ | (अनुस्वार) |
| 15. | ñ | (ञ्) |
| 16. | Kṣ | (क्ष) |
| 17. | V,W. | (व) |

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

## INTRODUCTION

Śakti is an important member of the Hindu pantheon. Śakti attained the highest position in the Purāṇas where she was enlisted in the trinity along with Viṣṇu and Śiva. The concept of Śakti is not only found in the Vedas but its antiquity can be traced to the Indus Valley civilization. Floating in the later Vedic literature and the epics, Śakti occupied a dominating position in the Purāṇas and the Upa-purāṇas. During this period Śakti became the chief object of worship as 'World-Mother'. Almost in all the Purāṇas and the Upa-purāṇas Śakti appears as an important Reality. Her importance can be seen from the fact that Śakti was given a position higher than that of Viṣṇu and Śiva in such Purāṇas as the Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the Devī Purāṇa, the Kālikā purāṇa, and the Mahābhāgavata purāṇa. In the sectarian Upaniṣads, specially the Śākta Upaniṣads, she is accepted as supreme reality.

This important aspect of Indian religion has not been studied intensively as yet. No systematic study of the Śakti-cult has been carried so far. However stray attempts have continued to be made in this field since the beginning of this century. John Wocdroffe was the pioneer in this field and he explored the Tāntric literature as well as the Śakti-cult in his works. Next came Payne who in his work 'The Śāktas' dealt briefly with the cult of Śakti. A similar attempt was also made by V. R. R. Dikshitar with regard to the Lalitā-cult. R.C. Hazra furnished an elaborate introduction to the Śākta Upa-purāṇas, dwelling mostly on their chronology, in the second volume of his Upa-purāṇic studies. Gopinatha Kaviraja—himself well versed in Tantric Sādhanā has contributed much to the study of the Śakti cult, mostly through his articles and discourses.

It is hoped that this study of *The Śakti-cult in ancient India*, will prove very useful to the students of the Śakti cult in particular, and of Indology in general.

The present work proposes to study the cult from various angles, drawing upon the ancient Indian literature but specially the Purāṇas, the Upa-purāṇas and the Tantras. It has been divided into six chapters, which are briefly introduced as follows :—

The first chapter introduces Śaktism—and consists of the definition, a comparison with Tantrism, an explanation of its origin, and its place in the Indus-Valley civization. The concept of Śakti in the Ṛgveda Saṃhitā and other Vedic literature is also examined. Then its development is traced in the epics and the Śākta Upani ads.

The second chapter begins with an introduction to the Mahā Purāṇas and their chronology. It deals with Śakti as depicted in the Mārkandeya Puraṇa and Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Next a survey is made of the various concepts of Śakti, found in the other Mahā-Purāṇas. Lastly it dwells upon the philosophical speculations about Śakti, in the Purāṇas.

The third chapter concerns the Upa-purāṇas, dealing with Śakti worship, viz:—the Devī purāna; the Kālikā purāṇa and the Mahābhāgavata purāṇa. In these purāṇas Śakti enjoyed a supreme position and various ritualistic and philosophical aspects were taken into account. These purāṇas generally deal with the adoration of specific forms of Devī—namely Vindhyavāsinī, Kāmākhyā and others.

In the fourth chapter the Tantras, their antiquity, relation with the Vedic religion, concept of Śakti, Kālī and Daśa Mahāvidyās, are dealt with. In the Tantras concept of Śakti got a Tantric colouring in idiom and ritualism. The Tantras laid down their own philosophical views and strongly emphasized S dhanā.

The fifth chapter deals with worship and ritualism in the Śakti cult. The ritualism of Śaktism was influenced by the religious ceremonies of the popular cults. Paśu-bali, Ṣoḍasopacāra and sometimes even Narabali were offered to the goddess. This chapter deals in detail with the various aspects

of the ritualism of this cult. A description of the Vratas, forms a notable section of this chapter, for they are very important in the purāṇic and popular concepts of the Śakti cult.

The last chapter gives a detailed description of various incarnations or manifestations of Śakti. She has two salient aspects of her nature white (Saumya) and black (Krūra). The white aspect deals with the creative faculty of Śakti, while the black one is concerned with the power of destruction. The influence of the Śakti cult was so intense on Indian life that many Śakti pīṭhas were established throughout India for keeping alive the conciousness of unity among the people living in the different regions of this vast country.

This study deals with the origin, growth and prevalence of 'Śākti-worship' in the various periods and seeks to bring into unity its philosophical, religious and ceremonial aspects. It is hoped, that this study may help in the proper appreciation of the religious and the cultural history of India.

At the very outset I must express my deep sense of gratitude for Dr. N.N. Chaudhuri, (formerly Professor and head of the Deptt. of Sanskrit, University of Delhi) and Dr. C. B. Gupta, Senior Lecturer in Sanskrit, School of correspondence courses, University of Delhi, who initiated me into the study of the Śakti cult. Hence my hearty thanks are due to both these supervisors, under whose able guidance I have been able to complete my thesis 'Śakti cult in the Purānas' and got my Ph. D. from the University of Delhi in 1967. I also express my sincere respect to my respected father Shri Ram Chandra Sharma whose invaluable suggestions and timaly encouragement facilitated my work immensely.

My thanks are also due to my teacher Dr. Satya Vrata Shastri, Professor and head of the Deptt. of Sanskrit, and Dean Faculty of Arts, University of Delhi-Delhi, for his kind help and valuable suggestions. I also express my obligations to him for contributing a scholarly foreward to my work.

I am also very grateful to my friends, Dr. S. S. Rana, Reader in the Deptt. of Sanskrit; Dr. Vachaspati Upadhyaya, Deptt. of Sanskrit, University of Delhi; and Dr. T.R. Sharma Deptt. of Sanskrit S. G. T. B. Khalsa College, Delhi; and

Y. D. Sharma, Deptt. of Sanskrit, Hindu college, Delhi. Who helped me a lot in preparation of this book.

I am very greatful to Dr. Gauri Nath Śastri, formerly Vice-chancellor of the Varanasiya Sanskrit University-varaṇasi and Dr. R.C. Pandeya, Prof. and Head of the Philosophy Department, University of Delhi, Delhi for their invaluable suggestions and help from time to time.

I am highly greateful to all of my teachers, friends, collegues, and my wife, who directly or indirectly have helped me a lot by their varied activities.

I shall be failing in my duty if I don't thank Shri Bhagwan Singh of Bharatiya Publishing House, Delhi, who happily undertook the work for publication and Shri Sham Lal of Amar Printing Press, Delhi, for exceedingly seeing the book through the press.

Lastly I would beg the forgiveness of the scholars for not having been able to look through the proofs as carefully, as I should have and some mistakes in the work remained uncorrected. I shall feel highly gratified if the present attempt meets with the approbation of the scholars and stimulates interest in the field of my study. I would only like to echo the compliments of Kālīdāsa.

**आ परितोषाद् विदुषां न साधुमन्ये प्रयोगविज्ञानम् ।**

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Gangā-Desehra
30.5.1974

## INTRODUCTION

### *DEFINITION*

Śaktism is the worship of *Śakti* or the female principle, the primary factor in the creation and reproduction of the universe.[1] The term *Śakti* represents female divinily in general and stands for the energising power of some divinity in particular.[2] *Śakti*, generally, as *Śiva's* spouse is worshipped in many incarnations, of which *Devī*, *Durgā* and *Kālī* are the best known.[3]

A true *Śākta* adores her with a view to the acquisition of supernatural faculties through her help, or to the destruction of enemies through her co-operation.

Śaktism is considered to be an off-spring of Śaivism by some scholars, but it is in fact an independent cult of the female principle, with some relation to Śaivism. From the historical point of view Śaktism seems to be a combination of *Āryan* religion with Non-*Āryan* beliefs.[4]

### *Śaktism Vs. Tantrism*

In order to understand the cult of the female principle, it is essential to have in mind a clear distinction between Śaktism and Tantrism. The former means the worship of

1. Devī Bhāgavata. p.—1.2.19-22.
   Sītophanisad 34.
   Devī p. 37/69.
2. a. J. S. Joshi, ed.—Halāyudha Koṣa. p. 648.
   b. Nānārtha Ratnamālā—Poona, 1954, p. 27; 253.
   c. Hindi Śabdasāgara. Vol. IV, ed. 1928.
   d. Medinī Koṣa, p. 61.
   e. Śabdārtha Chintāmani, Vol IV, p. 491.
   f. Carl Cappeller, Sanskrit English Dictionary, ed. 1891, p. 534.
   g. A. A. Macdonell, Sanskrit English Dictionary, 1893, p. 305.
   h. New Standard Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 2161.
   i. Nyāya Koṣa, p. 853.
3. Elliot, Hinduism and Buddhism, Vol. II, p. 274.
4. E. A. Payne, 'the Śāktas, ed. 1933, p. 63.

goddesses, especially of those who are regarded as forms of *Śiva's* consort.[1] While the latter is a system of magical and secramental ritual, taught in the sacred Hindu texts known as *tantras*. The *tantras* profess to teach the attainment of the highest aims of religion by such methods as spells, diagrams (*Yantras*) gestures (*Mudrās*) and other physical exercises (*Yoga*). Tantrism is nothing but a simplification of religion on mechanical rather than on emotional lines.[2]

### *ŚAKTI*

The idea of *Śakti* is as old as man. Man is great to the extent that the *Śakti* inherent in him is magnified, and his highest endeavour is to rouse this *Śakti*. The Indian idea of godhead, including that of the great Brahman (both as *Śakti* and as *Brahman*) rests on this and has employed it to a considerable extent. A *Ṛṣi* in the *Ṛgveda* speaks in a eulogizing tone to this aspect regarded as female.[3]

It is she who keeps the gods in their position, makes a Man virile or makes a sage of a man.[4] This *Śakti* is generally *Nigūdha*, or hidden,[5] even the gods do not know her, for not infrequently they are puffed up with arrogance and conceit.[6] The association of *Śakti* and *Śiva* is at the root of material and spiritual betterment of the mankind.[7] Man in all ages has realised *Śiva*, his manifestation in her through contemplation, and this is what is possible through worship.[8]

### *Probable origin of the Śakti-cult*

The Mahenjo Daro discoveries have made it pretty clear that the origin of belief in the Mother Goddess (*Śakti*) can be traced to the pre-Vedic period. But scholars differ on the point of the origin of the idea of *Śakti* or the Mother Goddess, mainly because of the difficulties of deciphering the Indus-

1. Ibid. p. 6.
2. Elliot, Hinduism and Buddhism, Vol. II, p. 274.
3. Ṛgveda X. 125. 1-8. (Devī Sūkta or Vāk Sūkta).
4. Ibid. X 125.5.
5. Śvetāśvataropaniṣad, 1.3.
6. Kenopaniṣad, 3.1.
7. Śvetāśvataropaniṣad, IV.10.
8. Ibid. I.14.

script, and partly because of the absence of any written document prior to the *Ṛgveda*, which is undoubtedly dominated by male-deities. The various views regarding the origin of the concept of *Śakti* and her cult are as follows :—

1. According to some the fertility theory may be the origin of the *śakti*-cult. Appropriate to this fertility theory is the Hindu conception of the earth as the Mother[1] and its intimate association with agriculture. It is generally believed that in primitive times man looked upon the earth at a personification of the deity of fertility.

2. Others are of the view that the worship of a Mother Goddess is a widespread religious phenomenon. Friedrich Heiler has given instances from every part of the world to show that the conception of God as Mother is as natural and ultimate as the concept of Him as Father.[2] And it is just possible that the Indian concept of the Śakti-cult is nothing but a part of that widespread worship of a Mother-goddess. Payne, in his work '*The Śāktas*' speaks of the possibility of certain contracts between the civilisations of Knossos and Egypt on the one hand and Pre-*Āryan* India on the other[3] as early as the 3rd millenium B.C. The history of India, Baluchistan, Iran, Mesopotamia, Asia minor, Egypt, etc., bears testimony to the worship of a Mother-goddess in pre-historic times.

3. Mackenzie advocates an Asiatic origin. He says that during the Brahmanic age the *Bhāratas*, the inhabitants of 'Middle Kingdom', started worshipping 'Bhāratī', a goddess not unlike the mother-goddesses of Egypt and early Europe. This goddess became associated with '*Sarasvatī*' and was ultimately recognised as the wife of *Brahmā*, the Supreme God. When Buddhism declined and Śiva became the most popular deity, this goddess-worship was transferred to his consort and was organized into a separate sect.[4]

1. Atharvaveda, III 9; Rv. V.84.
   Ibid. XII.1.
2. E. A. Payne. The Śāktas, p. 115.
3. Ibid, p. 114.
4. Mackenzie, Indian myth of legend, p. XXXIX.

4. Starbruck points out that when the *Āryan* invaders settled in India to a relatively peaceful life and agricultural pursuits, the worship of female deities rose to a position of supreme importance; among these were *Durgā*, the eternity; *Sarasvatī*, supreme wisdom; and *Śakti*, mother of all phenomena.[1]

5. Smith[2] and Elliot have held that the migrations of the nomad nations of the Central Asian steppes, which culminated in the Kushan or Indo-Scythian conquest in Northern India, must have caused this change in Hinduism.[3]

6. Slater maintained that while the Dravidians were Āryanized in language, the Āryans were Dravidianized in culture.[4] He believes that the cult of the Mother-goddess must have arisen first among the matriarchal tribes.[5]

7. Marshall observes that the cult of the mother goddess must have originated in Anatholia (probably in Phrygia) and from there spread throughout the Western Asia.[6]

8. The *Mahābhārata* speaks of the worship of the female demon by *Vāhikas*[7], which suggests that the cult of the Mother goddess arose in India, wherein once the Mohenjodaro civilization flourished. It is just possible that immediately afterwards the cult spread far and wide in the world from an Indian origin.

## Different periods :

*Division*

The cult of *Śakti* produced a profound influence on genral Indian thought. It was wide-spread in the past and has continued to the present day.[8] For the sake of convenience we

1. Starbruck, Female Principle : Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol V, P. 828.
2. Smith, Oxford History of India, p. 9.
3. Elliot, Hinduism and Buddism, Vol. II, p. 276.
4. Slater, Oxford History of India, p. 63.
5. Ibid. p. 91-92, 103.
6. Marshall, Mahenjodaro and Harappa Civilization, I, p. 50.
7. Mahābhārata Sabhā Parvan, ch. 18.1.
8. Kalyāṇa 'Śakti Aṅka', 1934, p. 637.

may agree with Gopināth Kavirāj in dividing the history of *Śākta* culture tentatively into three periods.[1]

1. Ancient or pre-Buddhist, going back to pre-historic times.

2. Mediaeval or post-Buddhist, rather post-christian upto 12th century.

3. Modern, from 13th century onwords.

No independent work on the *Śakti* cult in the ancient period is available while the mediaeval was the most creative period in the history of the *Śākta* literature. Most of the standard works, including the major *Purāṇas*, *Upapurāṇas* and the original *Āgamas* were written in this period. The modern period too has been productive, but with a few brilliant exceptions most of the works produced in this period are of a secondary character.[2]

*Śaktism in the Indus-Valley Period* :

The history of the concept of the Mother goddess, the supreme creative principle of the universe, is of absorbing interest. When we go back to the history of *Śakti*-worship we see stretching away into the remote and fading past the figure of the goddess. She is the Mother of Nature, most ancient amongst deities; the *Ādyā-Śakti*, the Dusk Divinity, many breasted, crowned with towers, whose veil has never been lifted; Isis, 'the one who is all that has been, is and will be; 'Kālī'; Hathor; Cybele, the cow-mother goddess; *Iḍā*; *Tripura-sundarī*, the Ionic mother; *tef* the spouse of *shu*, by whom he affects the birth of all things, Aphrodite; Astaste in whose groves the Balim were set; Babylonian Mylitta; Buddhist *Tārā*, the Mexican Ish, Hellenio Osea, the consecreted, the free and pure; African Selembo, who like *Pārvatī*, roamed in the mountains, Roman Juno; Egyptian Bast, the flaming mistress of life, of thought, of love, whose festival was celebrated with wanton joy; the Asyrian Mother Succoth Bewth; the Northern Freīra; *Mūla Prakṛti*; Semele; *Māyī*; Ishtar; Saitic

1. Article on Śākta Philosophy in the History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, ed. S Radha Krishnan, Vol. I, p. 402.
2. Ibid.

Neith-Mother of the gods, eternal deepest ground of all things *Kuṇḍalī*; *Guhya Mahā Bhairavī* and all the rest.[1]

The beginnings of the worship of *Śakti* go back in India as in many other countries of the ancient world, to a very remote past.[2] Remains of the cult of the Mother Goddess have been recognized by many scholars among the various interesting objects unearthed in the pre-Vedic sites of the Indus Valley. One of the commonest of such objects is a pottery figurine of a female, practically a nude, with a very short skirt held round the loins by a girdle. It has been said that these pottery images of the goddess, whose name is unknown, were kept in almost every house in the ancient cities of the Indus, probably in a recess or in a bracket on the wall.[3]

In the findings from Harappa there is one symbol of *Yoni*, from which something is emerging. Beside it a man is shown standing with a sword in his hand and a lady with upheld hands. Perhaps she was to be offered to the goddess.[4] From this it can be concluded that the cult of the Mother-goddess was already prevalent in the Indus-valley.[5]

Sir John Marshall has compared the large number of female figurines of terra-cotta, found both at Mohenjodaro and Harappa, with kindred examples from the neighbouring country of Baluchistan. The figurines are generally portrayed in the form of a standing and almost nude female, wearing a band of girdle about her loins with an elaborate, more or less crescent-shaped,[3] head-dress and collar, occasionally with ornamented cheeks and a long necklace, and wearing ear-ornaments which take the form of shell-like cups suspended by hands on either side of the head.[6]

Pottery images of the goddess have been found in the

1. Woodroofe, Śakti and Śākta, p. 128.
2. Mackay, Early Indus Civilisation, II Ed., p. 54.
3. Ibid. p. 54.
4. Radha Kumud Mukerji, Hindu Sabhyata, p. 23.
5. Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization, Vol. I, p. 57-58. Also Mackay 'The Indus Civilisation', p. 66-68.
6. Marshall, op. cit. I, p. 49.

course of the excavations of the sites. The early Indus-valley settlers appear also to have worshipped the goddess in her aniconic form. Many ring stones, discovered at the sites can justifiably be described as cult objects symbolising the mother aspect of the goddess.[1] These must be studied along with not only the much-decorated types of ring stones of the Maurya period found in many north Indian sites like Taxila, Kosam, Rajghat and Patna, but also the phallic objects symbolizing the Father god of the Indus valley people, conveniently described by Marshall as Protoshines. The ornamented ring stones of the historic period no doubt represent some variety, but their general character shows that they were cult objects comparable with the prehistoric ring stones of the Indus-valley on the one hand and the *cakras* and the *Yantras* of the later *Śāktas* on the other.[2]

One such ring stone of a representative nature, unearthed by Marshall at Hathial near Taxila has been described by him in this manner. It is of polished sand-stone, 3¼ in diameter, adorned on the upper surface with concentric bands of cross and cable patterns and with four nude female figures alternating with honey-suckle designs engraved in relief round the central hole.[3] These female figures either represent different aspects of the goddess, or are mere repetitions of the same theme. The lady of the ring stone exactly resembles the gold-leaf female figure dug out of the stupa at Lauriya Nandangarh by Block hand correctly identified by Coomaraswami and others as the Mother goddess.[4]

A seal, unearthed at Harappa shows a nude female figure, upside down with legs wide apart, and with a plant issuing from her womb. Her arms are shown in the same position in which those of the proto-Śiva on the Mohenjodaro seal amulet are depicted. Marshall rightly compared this striking representation of the goddess, with a plant issuing

1. Mackay, Indus Civilization, ed. II, p. 54.
2. Benerjee, Development of Hindu Iconography, p. 188.
3. Archaelogical Survey of India, Annual Reports, 1927-28, p. 66.
4. Coomaraswamy, H.I.I. p. 10.

from her womb, with the device on an early Gupta terracotta ceiling showing a goddess with her legs in much the same position, but with a lotus emerging from her neck instead of from her womb.[1]

This idea of vegetation emerging from some part of the body of the goddess reminds us of the *Devi Māhātmya* concept of her *Śākambharī* aspect, in which she is said to have nourished the drought afflicted people with vegetation produced from her body.[2]

While comparing the statuettes of the Mother-goddess found in the Indus-valley region with those of Western Asia, Marshall makes an emphatic remark : 'Even, however, without the analogy of these images from Western Asia, there would be a strong presumption in favour of the examples from Mohanjodaro, Harappa, and Baluchistan being effigies of the great mother goddess of the one or other of her local manifestations. For, in no country in the world has the worship of the Divine Mother been from time immemorial so deep-rooted and Uniquitous as in India. Her shrines are found in every town and hamlet throughout the length and breadth of the land.[3]

The following close resemblance between the cult of the Mother goddes in the Indus-valley and in Sumeria, is sufficient to show the universality of the cult of *Śakti*. The *Sanskrit* epithet '*Lokamātā*' was right because the Mother goddess was worshipped throughout the ancient world. The following points are similar in the cults of both countries :—

1. The lion was the vehicle of the goddess in both countries, while the bull was the vehicle of her consort.

2. The goddess was conceived in both places as a war-goddess.

3. The manifestation of the goddess both as a virgin, and as a wedded lady.

1. Marshall, Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization, Vol. I, p. 52, Pl. XII.
2. Mārkandeya Purāna, Devī-Māhātmya, XI. 48-49a.
3. Marshall, Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization, I, p. 50-57.

4. In both countries the goddess is intimately associated with hills and mountains.

5. And lastly even the term 'Nāna' which is the name of the goddess in Sumeria is preserved in the Indian name Nānā Devi, enshrined at Hinglāj in Gujrat.[1] (Now in Pakistan)

Thus in the opinion of Sir John Marshall, Śakti-worship originated in India out of the cult of the Mother goddess, and it was closely connected with the cult of *Śiva*. *Śakti* and *Śiva* are indissolubly linked[2] in the imagination of India, as the creative principle (power) and the creator, with a colourful family representing the collective organism of life.[3]

The pre-vedic archaeological data discussed above throws much light on the early stages of the cult long before it was fully developed into the *Śakti* worship of the epic and the Pauraṇic age. It seems that ancient people living in primitive times, in the matriarchal period, had a veneration and love for the mother, which culminated in Mother-worship. It is this incontrovertible fact which, perhaps, made the Vedas prescribe first *Mātṛ Devo Bhava*' and then *Pitṛ Devo Bhava*.

*Idea of Śakti in the Ṛgveda*

The concept of *śakti* was there in the minds of Vedic seers (though the term *Śakti* is not found in Vedic texts), is proved by the fact that a number of goddesses are mentioned and in different capacities. Each goddess, whether you call her so or not, was a *Śākti* or personification of female energy. By the Vedic scholars it is generally accepted that Vedic ritualism was dominated by the male deities, and goddesses occupy a very subordinate position in Vedic belief and worship, and play, hardly any part as rulers of the world.[4] This idea was based on the fact that only few hymns are addressed independently to the goddesses viz. one entire hymn to goddess *Rātṛī* and *Pṛthivī*, *Sarasvatī* has three hymns, God-

1. Calcutta review, 1913, p. 235-36.
2. Raghu Vaṁśa by Kālidāsa 1.1.
3. Ibid.
4. A. A. Macdonel, Vedic Mythology, p. 124.

dess *Āpa* has four and last of all *uṣas* towers above them with 20 separate hymns addressed to her.[1] But this theory of indifferences of the Vedic seers to female deities is disproved by the mention of a large number of female deities in the *Ṛgveda*. There are names of 40 goddesses found in the *Ṛgveda* : *Uśas*, *Rātrī*, *Sinivālī*, *Rākā*, *Gangu*, *Pṛthivī*, *Aditi*, *Pṛśni*, *Diti*, *Swasti*, *Revatī*, *Purandhi*, *Anumati*, *Āpadevis*, *Saraswatī*, *Sindhu*, *Aranyānī* *Indrānī*, *Varunānī*, *Rudrānī*, *Āgneyī*, *Śaranyu*, *Sūryī*, *Śaci*, *Rodāsī*, *Sītā*, *Dakśinā*, *Śṛaddā*, *Dhiśnā*, *Ilā*, *Mahī*, *Bhāratī*, *Gaurī*, *Svāhā*, *Urvaśī*, *Alakṣmi*, *Kṛtvā*, *Nirṛti* and so on.[2] Some of these female deities are of a very interesting character and bring out in a striking manner the inner sorkings of the Vedic poets' minds. The conception of *Aditi*, shows that the supreme being conceived of as a female rises to a height which not even the mightiest of the Vedic gods reach.

*Aditi*

If an analysis is made of the nature of such goddesses as *Aditi*, *Uśas*, *Saraswatī*, etc. one cannot fail to recognise the importance ascribed to them by the ancient seers of India. *Aditi*, the great Divine mother[3] is concerned prominently with the removal of sins, sometimes alone, sometimes with *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*. She gives wealth free from sin and hatred.[4] She releases men from the net of the enemy,[5] and is invoked for protection.[6] She is without enemy.[7] The seer says, 'O Goddess, dear to many people, if, you grant protection nobody can do ill."

Her association with *Varuṇa* and *Mitra* who are *Dhṛtavrata*[8] and with *Ṛta* proves the ethical, abstract nature of her conception. This point goes to prove a very early origin of *Aditi* among Ṛgvedic gods. Her epithets all pervasive and

1. Macdonell, Sanskrit Literature, p. 81, 92, 93, 102, 103.
2. Indian Culture, Vol. VIII, July September, p. 66.
3. RV. VIII.25.7-8.
4. Ibid. I.185.3.
5. Ibid. VIII.67.11.
6. Ibid. X.36.3.
7. Ibid. II.40.6.
8. Ibid. VII.18.4.

all-finder,[1] indicate her superiority over other goddesses. Her harmlessness and superiority may be indicated by her description as an immaculate cow and as one without enemy,[2] as well as by the emphasis laid on the absence of hatred or himsa in her.[3]

It is the *Aditi* who bears the sun by immaculate conception and the brings forth all life in the universe.[4] She is the divine virgin and birthless.[5] She is the might.[6] From her are born gods and *gandharvas*, human beings, fathers and all the creatures, hence she is the mother of all.[7] She is also identified with *Pṛthvī*, the earth, and *Dyāvā-pṛthvī*. In her the concept of the all-Mother, who is not only the mother of man, gods and all created things but also the cause of everything, past, present and future, from whom springs all life and to whom it returns on death, was developed.

*Uṣas*

Next to *Aditi*, the goddess *Uṣas* (dawn) is celebrated in the *Vedas*. The ushering in of the day and the disappearance of the night brought cheer and joy to the Vedic man and he sang hymns in praise of that glorious dawn, a personification of the goddess of good hope. In the *Ṛgvedic* hymns she is celebrated, sometimes as a maiden of beauty and promise, sometimes as the daughter of *Dyaus* or heaven and at other times as being driven in a car, with the men's light pursuing her, even as a lover of a gay maiden. She infuses fresh life into everything iucluding vegetation. In the Vedic hymns *Uṣas* is called the preserver of men,[8] goddess of earthly treasure,[9] benefactress of men[10], preserver of the world,[11] the greatest

1. RV. VIII.25.7-8.
2. Ibid. V. 46.6; X.100.1.
3. Ibid. VII.66.6.
4. AV. 13.2.9.
5. RV. 10.7.2.
6. Ibid. 8.18.6.
7. Tattiriya Āranyaka, 10.21.1.
8. RV. I 12.3.
9. Ibid. I.113.7.
10. Ibid. VII.75.1-2.
11. Ibid. VII.75.4.

goddess, producer of food,[1] dispeller of enemies,[2] guide of man,[3] curer of disease,[4] inspirer of five tribes[5] and she is *Ārya Patnī*.[6] Though she is called mother of the gods and the mightiest goddess, but she does not come near the All-mother concept held by *Aditi*. Both of these viz. *Uṣas* and *Aditi* are spoken of as rivals.

Anthropomorphic representation of the goddesses in the *Ṛgveda* reaches its climax in the beautiful goddess of dawn. There are three points to be noted in the physical representation of *Uṣas*, e.g. her youth and beauty, her forwardness and her virginity, and her personal charms are described again and again in the language of extra-ordinary beauty. She is white-complexioned, perenially youthful, clad in white, and of radiant beauty.[7]

*Uṣas* is a warlike goddess and there are many references to her martial spirit. She is invoked to destroy enemies, she drives them away, destroys those who are filled with hätred against the Vedic seers. She is invoked to expel enemies and divide them.[9] The dawn goddess is compared to warriors. She is rebellious, destructive or revengeful and Indra-less.[10] There are references to hostilities between her and Indra.[11] The greatness of *Uṣas* is testified repeatedly. She is the highest goddess above all,[12] a mighty goddess,[13] she is the mother of the gods and thus *Aditi*'s rival.[14]

1. RV. VII 79.3.
2. Ibid. VII.81.6.
3. Ibid. VII.81.1.
4. Ibid. I.12.1.
5. Ibid.III 79.1.
6. Ibid. VII.6.5.
7. Ibid. I.113.2; 7. V.47.1.
8. Ibid. I 48.8; VII.81.6; IV.52.4; I.48.13.
9. Ibid. I.113; VII.77.4.
10. Ibid. VII.18 16.
11. Ibid. VIII.96.1; IV.19.8; IV.23.7; IV.30.8, 9, 11.
12. Ibid. VII.79.3.
13. Ibid. VII.81.4.
14. Ibid I.113.19.

In another passage *Uṣas* is told to be dark at first and then becoming fair. She emerged radiant and white complexioned in the later development in the *Durgā-Māhātmya* of Mārkaṇḍeya purāṇa where *Kauśikī* is told to be emerging out of *Kālikā's* body.[1] It is said that *Uṣas* has her seat on the hills and again, that she comes from uplands.[2] This idea would definitely indicate her affiliation with the north and some affirmity with the later mountain goddess Pārvati.

Summarizingly we can say that *Uṣas* is a mountain born maiden-goddess, glowing with youth and beauty, bold and reductive, delighting in martial deeds and ambitious. Though there is a touch of cruelty in her but she is more prominently a gracious, kind and benefectress of men, mother, mistress and preserver of the universe. All this leads us towards the conclusion that the concept of *śakti Durgā* residing in the mountains, and a powerful, virgin, war-goddess, if not originated was developed in the age of the Vedas.

In the *Veda*, *Saraswatī* has two aspects, She is a holy[3] river and a goddess. She is purifier as a river and invoked with seven *Sindhus* called mothers.[4] Residence on her banks is desired by the *Ārya* people,[5] and sacrifices used to be performed on her banks. As a goddess she presides over truthful speech[6] and knowledge. She has considerable ritual importance and is generally grouped together with *Ilā*, *Mahī*, *Bhāratī* and the wives of the Gods.[7] She is the benefectress of men and is called *Sunṛtā Devī*. She is charitable, beneficient,[8] beautiful, well-formed, white-complexioned goddess.[9] She is the best among rivers, among goddesses and

1. Durgā Saptaśati V.86-88.
2. RV. VI.65.5; VII.76.2.
3. Ibid. VIII.54.4.
4. Ibid. X.64.9.
5. Ibid. III.23.5.
6. Ibid. I.3.10-12.
7. Ibid. V.5.8; IX.5.8; X.110.8.
8. Ibid. I.40.3.
9. Ibid. VII.96.3-4.

mothers.[1] Her might is so great that even gods worthy of worship approach her on knees.[2] In the 6th Mandala there is a new development of her conception. She appears suddenly as a mighty goddess of war who is feared even by the gods and her help is invoked in battles. From a white complexioned, beautifully formed goddess, she becomes a terrible-looking goddes causing death to enemies.[3] She appears also as the guardian or tutelary deity of the Vedic people for whom she shows her affection in various ways.

These three distinguishable types of mother goddesses in the Ṛgveda viz.[4]

1. The type of beneficient forgiving, kind and gentle mother goddess represented by *Aditi*.[5]
2. The type of virgin mother-goddess of martial spirit and beauty represented by Usas and
3. The type of mother-goddess who is regarded as a tutelary or special guardian deity of a people represented by *Saraswatī*, go to prove that all these were the different manifestations of the great divine principle conceived by the old sages in its female aspect.

*Śakti*

The mother-goddess conception may be said to reach its culmination when the abstract idea of the cosmic principle as the source of all creation is conceived of as female. The so-called *Devī Sūkta* of the *Ṛgveda*. identifies *vāk* with the Almighty goddess. If *Saraswatī* the goddess of speech is connected with the deity of this hymn, then she is described with special emphasis, to be war-like goddess and what is more important in the light of later history, she is brought into connection with *Rudra*.[6] She appears more emphatically as a champion of

1. RV. IX.81.4; VII.95.6.
2. Ibid. II.41.16.
3. Ibid. VII.95.4.
4. Ibid. VI.61.1.
5. Indian Culture. Vol. VIII/No. 2, p. 168.
6. RV. X.125.6.

people. "I fight for men." *Saraswatī* has the dual aspect of a destroyer and a gracious giver of boons.[1]

The hymn, we may say, is nothing more than the recognition of *Śakti* as the cosmic principle regarding the whole universe and this recognition brought forth solemn invocation from gods and ancient seers. Hopkins observes that in this hymn there is almost Vedantik pantheism with the *Visnuite* doctrine of special grace included.[2]

Whatever has been said in the *Devī-Māhātmya* in praise of the goddess *Vāk* applies to the *Devatā* of this *Sūkta.* The Devi is called *Deva jananī*, and the supreme Mother principle with which nothing can be created either on the level of Mind or of Matter, either amongst the immortal gods or amongst mortal men [3] She is called the Queen, the gatherer of treasures, most thoughtful, first of those who merit worship.[4] In this hymn she is said to be of the nature of movement,[5] and as the first creation as the word, the means of communication between gods and men.[6] Its high inspirational tone is of the same pitch as that in the ringing of words of the *Devi-Māhātmya.* In both of them this is an adoration of the supreme Śakti principle which treats all the worlds with its mysteries that are being unfolded in time and space and also that are beyond them.[7] Such a power herself is eternal mystery.

In a *Khila Rātri-śūkta*[8] *Śakti* is called the mother, the resort of all human beings. She blazes forth with *tapas* and is worshipped by the devotees for obtaining the fruits of their actions.[9] There are two verses in this hymn which clearly refer to the goddess *Durgā. Sāyaṇācārya*, the great Vedic com-

1. Indian Culture, January-March, 1942, p. 166.
2. Hopkins, Religions of India, p. 143.
3. Devi-Mahatmya, ed. V. S. Agravala, p. 223.
4. RV. X.125 3.
5. Ibid. 125.1.
6. Ibid. X.1 25.
7. V. S. Agravala, Devi-Mahatmya, p. 223.
8. RV. Khila Sūkta. X.127.
9. Ibid.

mentator, in his commentary on *Ṛgveda*, has pointed out that this *Durgā* is none other than the great *Śakti*.[1] In a hymn *Rātrī* is said to be the sister of *Uṣas*, possessing many eyes and looking forth with these at many spots. It means that the goddess *Rātrī* is the substratum of creation.[2] In this hymn a prayer is sent to her to protect the householder from the house of wild beasts and the ravages of thieves.[3] Here we may point out that this description of the goddess *Rātrī* in the Ṛgveda bears testimony to the fact that the concept of the goddess Kālī—a black goddess or the destructive was originated and supported by the Vedic seers.

According to a popular tradition there is another hymn called *Śrī Sūkta* which forms an appendix as *Khila Sūkta* of the Ṛgveda.[4] The hymn contains 15 verses and praises the goddess *Śrī*, the goddess of wealth. In the first verse the Goddess is invoked here and she is said of the colour of red lotus, seated on a red lotus and wearing a garland of red lotuses and she is called herself the deity of lotuses.[5] She is approached through the sacrificial fire to bestow on her devotees gold and domestic animals like cows and horses, to Vouchsāfe health, wealth, a good harvest, beauty, name and fame.[6]

Though however, it is a well-known fact that there is no mention in the Ṛgveda of such names as *Ambikā*, *Umā*, *Durgā* and *Kālī*, which became singly or collectively the names of the central figure of the *Śakta*- cult, the facts above discussed show that the developed *Śakti* worship of latter days was indebted to the goddess concept of the early vedic age. The three deities viz. *Vāc-Saraswatī*, *Rātrī* and *Śrī* of the hymns *Vak Sūkta*, *Rātri Sūkta* and *Śrī Sūkia* gives us a vivid picture of the three manifestations of Sakti as *Mahākāli*, *Mahālakṣmi* and *Mahā Saraswatī*.[7]

1. Sāyanācārya. Ṛgveda Bhāṣya. (Khila Ratri Sūkta).
2. Rv. X.127.1.
3. Ibid. X.
4. Sri Sukta (appended to the Vth Book of the Rv.).
5. Ibid. Verses I, 3, 4, 12-15.
6. Śrī Sūkta. V.8-10
7. Please see three episodes or charitas in Durgā Sapta Śatī.

**Concept of mother-goddess in the later vedic Literature** (with reference to Śākta Upaniṣads also).

Now coming to the other *Vedas*, which are generally taken to be later in point of time, we find the mention of the Goddess *Ambikā* in the *Vājasneyi Saṁhita*,[1] where *Ambikā* is addressed as the sister of the God *Rudra* and is invoked to come and partake of her share in the sacrifice alongwith *Rudra*. In this sacrifice called *Tryambaka* Homa, there is a mention of the offering of oblations on *Palāśa* leaves at the crossroads. Later on this offering was specially meant for the mother-goddess.[2] The text of *Vājasneyī Saṁhitā* runs as,[3] "This is thy portion, *Rudra*, graciously accept it together with thy sister *Ambikā*. The '*Śatapath Brāhman*[4] interprets the above passage as *Ambikā*, indeed, is the name of his sister and this share belongs to him with a female.

*Ambikā* is also mentioned in *Taittirīyu Saṁhita*.[5] She is autumn in the *Taittirīya Brahman*[6] and the *Śaṭapatha Brahman*.[7] In the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka Rudra* is called *Ambikāpati*[8]. Now we can say that *Ambikā* is an autumn goddess related to *Rūdra*. According to Keith the name is derived from *Tryambaka*, a name given to *Rudra* in the *Ṛgveda*.[9] Arbman explains the name as having three mothers and tries to connect *Rudra* with the cult of the mother goddess in mediaeval India.[10] This view though refuted by Keith seems to have some solid approach towards the history of *Śākta* religion.

*Umā*

*Umā* appears in the *Taittirīya Āranyaka* and in the same

1. Vājasneyī Samhitā, III.53.
2. Mṛchhakatikam I.15.
3. Vājasneyī Saṁhitā, III.53.
4. Śatapath Brāhmaṇa 2.ó.3.4.
5. Taittirīya Samhita, I.8.6.4.
6. Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa I.6.10.
7. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa II.6.2.9.
8. Taittirīya Ar. X.18.
9. Rv. VII.59.12. A. B. Keith, Religion and Phisosophy of the Vedas, Vol. 3 p 144.
10. Arbman, Rudra, p. 296 quoted by Keith, op. cit., p. 149.

text Rudra is invoked as Umāpati.[1] She is *Umā Haimavati* in the *Kena Upaniṣad*.[2] The legend of her appearance before *Indra* and other gods and imparting divine knowledge to them (*Brahman Iti*) is mentioned in a very beautiful way. *Haimavatī* is interpreted as the daughter of *Himvat* or the Himalayas. We know nothing about the previous history of this beautiful young goddess *Umā* but her rise to the position of a teacher of the gods could not have been sudden. It must be presumed that the cult of this mountain goddess must have been known long prior to this period.[3]

The more interesting and important thing is that both these goddesses viz. *Umā Haimavatī* and *Ambikā*, in the later Vedic literature are affiliated to *Rudra* as his consorts, and that is why the *Umā* is called *Haimavatī*, the daughter of or dweller in the *Himalayas*, as *Śiva* has been already said in the Vedas to be residing in the mountains (*Giriśa*, *Giriśanta*- and *Giritra*). Thus the name *Pārvatī* was given to the goddess as she was the wife of *Śiva*.

In the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* we find the Upaniṣadik conception of *Śakti* fully developed. In this theistic *Upaniṣad* the absolute *Brahman* of the *Upaniṣads* becomes the 'personal God', associated with his Śakti, who is not an altogether separate principle but belongs to him as his own.[5] She is also called *Māyā* when Śiva is *Māyin*[6]. She is called the power of *Brahman*. Similarly all the other principal *Upaniṣads* agree in emphasizing the active nature of Brahman (not devoid of nature).[7]

Now turning to the *Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtras* we find the mention of *Bhadra Kālī* in the *Śānkhyāyana Śrauta* Sūtra as well as in the *Gṛhya Sūtra*. In the *Bodhāyana Gṛhya* Sūtra and *Manu Samhitā Durgā* and *Jyeṣṭhā* are mentioned and offerings to her

1. Taittirīya Āranyaka, X.18.
2. Kena Up. III.25.
3. Indian Culture, October-December, p. 169, Vol. VIII, Nos. 2-3.
4. S. K. Das, Śakti or Divine power, p. 57.
5. Śvetāśvataropanisad. I.3.
6. Ibid. IV.10.
7. S.K. Das, Śakti or Divine power, p. 55.
Śvetāśvataropanisad, VI.8.

are prescribed.[1] In the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* there occur names, some of which are familiar names of independent goddesses and others as different names of *Devī*.

All these names, *Kālī Karālī Manojavā*, *Sulohitā*, and *Viśva Rūpā* are the names of *Agni's* seven flames in the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*. The names *Durgi*, *Vairochani*, *Kātyāyanī* and *Kanyā Kumāri* occur in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*[3]. The name *Durgi* explained by *Sāyana* to be the same as *Durga*, the meaning of this name given in the *Saptaśati* is difficulty.[4] Thus the concept of *Śakti* or *Durga* was gradually developed in the later *Vedic* literature.

*Form of Śakti in the Śākta Upanisads*

There are *Upaniṣads* called *Śākta Upaniṣads* which can undoubtedly be said to belong to the later epochs in Indian History.[5] These contain references and glorification of the goddess as well as *Śakti* cult. These Upaniṣads contain the philosophical basis of *Śaktism* and centre round *Śākti*, regarded as *Brahman* or *Īśwāra*. These advocote idealistic monism or Absolutism.[6] They lay stress on the dynamic nature of the creative power of *Brahman*,[7] i.e. *Śakti*, here as *Brahman* itself and not a separate entity only pertaining or related to *Brahman*.[8] The *Upaniṣads* as well as the *Śākta Tantras* have made *Śakti* and *Brahman* inseparable from each other[9]. This inseparable-

1. Śānkhyāy na Gr. S. II.14.1. (a).
   Manu S. III.89.
   Śānkhyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, IV.20.
   Bodhāyana Dharma Sūtra II.5.6.
   Bodhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra I.2.7.1; III.3.2;9.
2. Muṇḍakopaniṣad. I.2.4.
3. Taittirīya Āraṇyaka X.1.7.
4. Durgā Saptaśati IV.10,16.
5. J. N. Farquhar, An Outline of the Religious Literature of India, p. 266.
6. J. N. Sinha, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 87.
7. Ibid.
   Devī Upaniṣad. 2. Śyāmopaniṣad. 1.
8. Saraswati Rahasya Upaniṣad, 46.
9. Liṅga Purāna. II.11.1-34.
   Skanda Purāna, I.3.54-83.
   Tattva Prakāsh, 2.7.

ness is the key-note of Śaktism.

The *Śākta Upaniśads*, like the *Śaiva Upaniṣads* regard *Śakti*[1] as the creative power of *Śiva* without which he cannot create the universe. She is the mother of the universe.[2] She is the creator of *Prakṛti*, *Puruṣas* or individual souls, and the world.[3] She is identified sometimes with Prakṛti[4] as well as with Māyā.[5]

It is signficant to see how these *Śākta Upaniṣads* combine the beautiful and the horrible in their description of their particular Mother goddess or power incarnate : for example, the *Sumukhī Upaniṣad*[6] tells us how the goddess *Śakti* should be meditated upon as a beautiful young girl of sixteen, who is at the same time seated on a corpse, and is adorned with garments as well as ornaments besmeared with blood.

In the *Bhavṛchopaniṣad* the following different goddesses are mentioned[7]; *Mahā-tripura-sundarī*. *Bālāmbikā*, *Bagalā*, *Mātangī*: *Swayambarā Kalyāṇī*, *Bhuvaneshwari*, *Chāmuṇḍā*, *Chaṇḍā*, *Vārāhī*, *Tiraskarinī*, *Rāja Mātangī*, *Śuka Śyāmalā*, *Laghusyāsmalā*, *Aswārūdha*, *Dhūmāvatī*, *Śāvitrī*, *Sarasvatī* and *Brahmāndakalā*. There may be *Upanisads* dealing with each one of these goddesses, emphasizing the various aspects of power. We find that these *Upaniṣads* describe *Mahātripurasundarī* only and identify her with all other goddesses. The *Saubhāgya Lakshmī Upaniṣad*, contains a Tantrico-Yogic description of the goddess Mahā Lakshmī[8], whose worship secures the knowledge called *Śrī Vidyā*[9]. Goddess *Durgā* forms the subject matter of the *Tripurā Tāpini Upaniṣad*, The *Guhyakālyupaniṣad* contains a very splendid descreption of the macrocosmic meditaiion on the great goddess, *Mahādevī*.[10] The *Bahvricho-*

1. Tripurā Tāpini Upaniṣad. I.6. V.14;
2. Tripurā Upaniṣad. 13; Saubhāgya Lakshmi Up. V.4.
3. Devi Up. 2.
4. Ibid. 8.
5. Saraswatī Up. V.49-50.
6. Sumukhī Up. 1.
7. Bahvṛchopanisad, Verse. 8.
8. Neo Upaniṣads p. 41.
9. Saubhāgya L. Up. I.12.
10. Guhya Kālī Up. V.42-76.

*panişad*, the *Saraswatī Rahasyopanişad* and the *Devi Upanişad* give further characteristics of the goddess.

One more important characteristic of the *Śākta Upanişads* is that they abound in the various references to Tantric terminology.[1] Some of these Upanisads like *Tripurā Tāpinī* are entirely *Tantric* in their character. The symbolical terms of the *Tantras* are mentioned here. These are:—*Bindu*, *Nāda Rajas*, *Bīja*. *Sthāna*, *Śakti*, *Mantra*, *Yantra*, *Chakra*,[2] and *Tāraka* etc. Here we also see the Vedantic influence predominating over the Tantric terminology. The serious effort was made to express semi-mystically the philosophical ideas about Tantric terms and symbols. It is to be noted that simple forms of worship go hand in hand with the development of philosophical ideas in the progress of a society and it is natural that people should have tried to give a philosophical garb to their simple forms of worship in order to secure for them some public recognition. This may explain how Tantrism made an alliance with Vedantism by trying to give its symbols a philosophic grandeur.

The *Tripurā Upanişad* and *Tripurā Tāpini Upanişad* eulogize *Tripurā-Sundarī* who is primeval embodiment of *Śakti*, and that gives birth to the world.[4] The *Tripurā Tāpini Upanisad* has provided us with a detailed account of *Tripurā-Sundarī* or *Śrīvidyā*.[5] It has all the semblance of a work on the *Tantra*.[6] Mention is here made of *Śri Chakra*, *Kāma Kalā Mudrā* and *Kaula*.[7] Moreover, a couple of *Ṛks* is explained entirely from the viewpoint of *Śaktivāda*. This serves to give *Śakti*-cult a Vedic character. By offering an exposition of the *Gāyatrī* in the light of *Śāktivāda*,[8] this Upanişad has clearly shown

1. Neo Upanişads. p. 65.
2. Tripurā Up. V.14.
3. Ibid. V.2.
4. Tripurā Tāpini Upanişad. I.1.
5. Ibid, I.5.
6. Ibid. I.16.
7. Ibid. II.3.
8. Ibid. I.16-25.

how *Śakti Tattva* and *Brahmavidyā* are inter-woven with each other.

In the *Tripurā Upaniṣad* the philosophical basis of the system is briefly told in the first six *Ṛks.* of the *Upaniṣad*, while the last ten *Rks.* are an abstract of the different modes of worship offered to the *Devī.* The *Tripurā Tāpinī Upaniṣad* consists of five *Upaniṣads.* The first *Upaniṣad* is dealing with the meditation of *Devī.* The names of *Devī* as *Tripurā, Trikūṭā,*[1] *Māyā. Vaiṣṇavī,* and *Mahālakshmī* are mentioned here. The second Upaniṣad is a short exposition on the *Vyakti* of the *Tripuram* and the composition of the various *Cakras* with *Mudras.* The third *Upaniṣad* is a further elaboration of the *Mudras* and mode of worship. The fourth *Upaniṣad* begins with *Tripurāśtaka* in honour of *Trayambaka.* The last *Upaniṣad* purports to be an exposition of *Kriyā kāṇḍa* section of *Tripurā Upaniṣad*, where a good number of *Pīthas* are given. He who realises the *Devī* enjoys absolute bliss.[2]

*Devvupaniṣad* or *Atharvasirasopaniṣad*, resembles the *Tripurā Tāpini Upaniṣad* in its contents that relate directly to the personification of *Śakti* such as *Durgā* and the like. It has mentioned such embodiments of *Śakti* as *Durgā, Mahālakshmī, Saraswatī* and *Vaishnavī Śakti* is depicted here as *Brahmaswarupini*,[3] and not as mere activity of matter. On an inquiry made by the gods as to her identity, the supreme goddess said : '1 am this world'.[4] This is very significant because it indicates that there is nothing in the world, devoid of *Śakti.* She is the manifestation of different things, gods and powers.[5] She is also called *Mahāvidyā* and *Viśvarūpinī.*[6] She is *Durgā*[7] as she guards us against the difficulties. She is told to be living in the lotus within the heart, and as

1. Tripurā Tāpinī Upaniṣad, I.39.
2. Ibid. II.34.
3. Devī Up. Verse 2.
4. Ibid. 3.
5. Ibid. 3; 18.
6. Ibid, Verse 15.
7. Ibid. 25, 28.

refulgent like the morning Sun.[1] She is mild, relieves her devotees from the fear of worldly existence and is kindness incarnate.[2] She fulfils all desires, and hence is called the hevenly mild cow. She is the goddess of Nationality. She is regarded as unknownable. She is infinite, unborn, incomprehensible, and one because of her omnipresence.[3] She is also not one as she is the whole universe. She is verily the Brahman and hence she is called in contradictory terms at the same time, as she transcends all contradictions, being and not being all this universe, gods and all that exists. That, beyond which there is nothing, is *Durgā*.[4]

The gods praised her and offered their prayers to *Durgā*, who is pleasing to look at, bestows boons and freedom to her devotees from this world. She is three-eyed and wears red garments. She is all compassion. She takes one beyond the ocean of births and deaths.[5] In this hymn to the goddess few *Vedic Mantras* have been incorporated to bring home the antiquity of *Śakti*-cult. We feel tempted to reproduce the verse in which a beautiful description of the Magna mater has been given :

तामग्निवर्णां तपसा ज्वलन्तीं वैरोचनीं कर्मफलेषु जुष्टाम् ।
दुर्गां देवीं शरणमहं प्रपद्ये सुतरां नाशय ते तमः ॥[6]

and also obeisance to the goddess is made in the following verse[7] .

तां दुर्गां दुर्गमां देवीं दुराचारविघातिनीम् ।
नमामि भवभीतोऽहं संसारार्णवतारिणीम् ॥

The *Bahvṛchopaniṣad* makes the goddess *Mahā Tripura Sundarī* the object of its praise. The author of this *Upaniṣad* tells us that nothing existed in the beginning but the goddess alone.[8] Who afterwords created the world with all animate

1. Devī Up. V. 24.
2. Ibid. 25.
3. Ibid. 26.
4. Ibid. V.27-28.
5. Ibid. V.19.
6. Ibid. V.9.
7. Ibid. V.28.
8. Bahvṛchopaniṣad. V.1.

and inanimate objects.[1] She is the supreme-power that permeats the three worlds and the three bodies, and enlightens them both internally and externally.[2] She is all forms,[3] and she fills all space and time with her limbs. She is all sciences, good, bad and indifferent. She is verily the self, and also every thing else that is not self.[4] She is a wave incarnate on the ocean of the bliss of conscious existence. She is the unique consciousness of *Brahmanic* state. She is the self, the universe, all gods and all that exists. The only true thing is *Lalitā*,[5] and the supreme homogeneous *Brahman* in its inner meaning. She can be known only experiencing the oneness of the self and the *Brahman.*

The *Bhāvanopaniṣad* identifies the human body with *Śrī Cakra* and describes an elaborate mental worship.[6] In the end the *Pādya*, *Arghya*, *Naivedyu*, *Homa* etc. connected with *Śrī* worship are figuratively explained.[7] According to this upaniṣad everything takes the form of *Bhāvanā*.[8]

In the *Saubhāgya Lakṣhmi Upaniṣad* we have the description of *Lakṣhmī* and her *Mantra* viz. *Śrī Sūkta*. The *Upaniṣad* says that *Śrī Vidyā* can be attained only by those who had conquered desire.[9] A greater number of plexuses, are mentioned in this *Upaniṣad.* In addition to the plexuses are described the *Tālu Cakra*, *Bhrū Cakra*, *Nirvāṇa* and *Ākāśa Cakra* etc.[10] We need not mention here the objects that are to be meditated upon in these different plexuses, and the occult results of such a meditaton.

Goddess *Saraswatī* (*Śakti*) is described in the *Saraswatī Rahasya Upaniṣad* as the daughter of the four-faced God-*Brahma*.

1. Bahvṛchopaniṣad V.2.
2. Ibid. V.3-4, and so on.
3. Ibid. V. 5.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. V.8.
6. Bhāvanā Up. V.2, 26 lines.
7. Ibid. V.3. 15 lines.
8. Ibid. V.4.
9. Saubhāgya Lakṣmī Up. I.12.
10. Ibid. III.6-9.

she is supremely fair, having red lips and body fully adorned with ornaments.[1] She has four hands holding the *Akshamālā*, books and weapons respectively. She is the goddess of speech,[2] she is faith, retentive power and intellect incarnate.[3] She is the wife of creator. She is said to dwell in Kashmir,[4] but we are told at the same time that she has her home on the tip of her devotees tongue. She is the goddess of poetry. She is poetically described as one whose hair are rendered beautiful by the rays of the moon, the Lord of Night. She is the river of nectar,[6] that removes the distress of worldly existence, she is verily *Brahman* and hence has even that Brahmanic nature.[7] She creates the world by means of *Prakṛti* but is, in fact, *Puruṣa*, the supreme person.

*Sītopaniṣad* :

In the *Sītopaniṣad* as in the *Rāma Tāpanī Upaniṣad Sitā* is *Śakti* and is identified with *Prakriti* or creative power of God *Rāma*.[8] She is called *Mūla Prakṛti* and *Māyā*. She is described as comprising all the Vedas, Devas and Lokas.[9] In proximity to *Rāma*, the lord, she creates, preserves and destroys the world. Though she is unmanifested in her form but manifested in conscious beings and unconscious objects.[10] She is the both causes and their effects. She is the ground of all. She is virtue and glory. She is the goddess of fortune. She is neither different nor non-different from the Lord.[11]

*Sītopaniṣad* describes *Śakti* as three fold; the will power (*Ichchā Śakti*) power of action[12] (*Kriyā Śakti*) and direct power

1. Saraswati Up.
2. Ibid. V.5.
3. Ibid. V.10, 38.
4. Ibid. V.37.
5. Ibid. V.38.
6. Ibid. V.41.
7. Ibid. V.46-48.
8. Sitopaniṣad V.7-8.
9. Ibid. V.10.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid. 11.

(*Sākshāt Śakti*). Will power is again said to be of three types.[1] *Yoga Śakti* i.e. power of resting in the Lord in the state of dissolution of the world; power of enjoying (*Bhoga-Śakti*) the devotees moral and spiritual observance and (*Vīra Śakti*) the super-natural powers.[2]

There are two more *Upaniṣads* viz. *Kaula* and Tāraka *Upaniṣad*. Though very late, popularly current *Kaula Upaniṣad* is regarded as the Bible of the *Kaula* sect of the *Śāktas*, and its doctrines are held to be the prime authority. It deals with the left hand path (*Vāmamārg*) of Śaktism which has not won the approval of *Sri Śamkara*. He has descredited the methods of *Kaula* circle in his *Saundarya Laharī*. In the *Tārakopaniṣad*, the *Praṇava* is identified with the *Mūla Mantra* of the *Śākta* system of worship.

A critical study of the *Śakta Upaniṣada* reveals that they follow closely the *Paurāṇic* basis of *Śaktism*, which demonstrates the profound influence of the *Purāna* literature on the ideas and speculations of the age of these *Upaniṣads*.

### Worship of Śakti in the age of Epics

*Rāmāyaṇa* :

In the age of great epic *Rāmāyana*, *Śakti* or mother goddess had no independent cult of her own, though she is depicted in a very high position. She is called Devī, and is respected by all.[2] Even the gods were not able to undo whatever has been done by the goddess, will be clear by the story of Devi's curse to Kubera[6] and to the gods.[7]

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* she is always considered the wife of *Śiva*. Her name *Umā* and *Girijā* were very popular. Both these epithets were old epithets, *Umā* the daughter of *Himālaya* as used for her in *Kena Upaniṣad*, *Umā Haimawati*. Once she

1. Sītopniṣad. 35.
2. Ibid. 36-37.
3. Rāmāyaṇa. I.36.6; I.10.26; VII.13.22-35, 87, 93.
4. Ibid. 1.35.21.
5. Ibid. VII.13.22-35.
6. Ibid. I.3o 21-25.
7. Ibid. I.35.16-21; I.36.14-20; I.43.2; VII.4.28-30; VII.13.22; VII.16.32; VII.87.12-16; I.35.16; I.36.21; VII.87.11.
8. Kenopaniṣad.

is called *Rudrāṇī*[1] but her title *Pārvatī* was in practice.[2]

She is always depicted as the consort of *Śiva*,[3] in her benign form she is benevolent and graceful to her devotees.[4] The worship of *Śiva* and *Śakti* was prevelant in those days though not as an independant sect.[5]

Besides this important position attached to *Umā*, the consort of *Śiva*, there are some other references also which go to show that the *Śakti* cult or the worship of mother-goddess was in practice in those days though not mentioned in clear terms.

1. In the fifth book there is a mention of a goddess named *Surasā* who is told to be the Mother of Nāgas.[6] She is depicted living on the top of *Maināka* mountain, and also in the midst of the ocean.[7] She is called *Kāmarupiṇī*.

2. There is one another goddess in the *Ramāyaṇa* named *Siṁhikā* seen by *Hanumāna*, in the water of the oceans. We are told that she used to kill and devour everyone who used to fly over her.[8]

3. To our enough surprise, we find a mention that the *Laṅkā*, the capital city of *Rāvaṇa's* kingdom was protected by a demon goddess.[9] In the later literature she is definitely called the form of goddess *Śakti*.[10]

4. *Sīta*, the wife of Rāma has been described as *Kāla Rātri* the epithets used for the goddess, showing the terrible aspect of Śakti.[11] Her destructive force has been put forward in the term '*Sarva Laṅkā Vināśinīm*'. The idea that *Sītā* took

1. Rāmāyaṇa. VII.13.23.
2. Ibid. VII.4.27; VII.13.23; VII.6.26-30.
3. Ibid. I.41.1-3.
4. Ibid. VII.89.22-23.
5. Dr. Yaduvansi, Śaiva Mata, p. 59.
6. Rāmāyana, V.11.145-168.
7. Ibid. V.58.21-33.
8. Ibid. V.58.35-45; V.1.185-188.
9. Ibid. V.3.21-30; V.58.48-49.
10. Mahābhāgavata Purāna, 37.8.
11. Rāmāyaṇa, V.51.34-35.

the form of *Kālī* for the destruction of *Rāvaṇa* is found in the two later *Rāmāyaṇas* viz. *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*[1] and *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa*.[2]

5. One solid reference in the *Rāmāyaṇa* is sufficient to show that offering of the animals for the deity was prevalent in the times of epic.[3]

6. *Viśvāmira* teaches *Rāma* and *Lakshmaṇa* the knowledge (*Vidyā*) of weapons and *Mantras*. The knowledge (*Vidyā*) nameed *Balā* and *Atibalā* are said to be the mother of all knowledge[4], and as taught by the creator himself. They are said to be the *Vidyās* of superhuman efficacy and remind us of the terminology of the *Śāktic* literature and one sees here definite germs of Śaktism.[5]

7. Tradition has it that king *Rāma Chandra* of *Ayodhyā* was the first to celebrate the autumnal worship of the goddess. No clue to this tradition can be traced in the present recension of *Rāmāyaṇa* of *Vālmīki*. But the commentator of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Rāmānuja Swāmin*)[6] has quoted from the *Kālikā Purāṇa* to keep up the tradition. The *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa*,[7] the *Devi Bhāgavata Purāṇa*,[8] the *Kālikā Purāna*,[9] and other *Purānās* also support the tradition, while the *Devī Bhāgavata* and the *Brahma Vaivarta Purāna* speak of *Rāmāchandra* as having celebrated both the autumnal and the vernal festivals.[10] It would not be safe, to reject the tradition altogether as valueless, especially when it is supported by the authorities of the various *Purānas.*

(a) The *Kūrma Purāṇa*[11] mentions worship of *Durgā* by the king *Janaka* of *Mithilā*.

1. Ādhyātma Rāmāyaṇa. I.4.18; I.1 34; II 1.10-18; VI.4.40; 42; VI.3.35.
2. Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa. See Sakti Anka, Kalyana. 1934, p. 386.
3. Rāmāyaṇa : V.13.51.
4. Ibid. I.22.12-20.
5. Dikshitar, Lalitā Cult, p. 38.
6. Rāmayana VI.110. last verse (Kālikā Purāna 60.26-36).
7. Mahābhagvata Purāna, chs. 36-48.
8. Devī Bhāgavata Purāna III.30.40.46.
9. Kālikā Purāna, Chs. 62.36-48.
10. Devī Bhāgavata Purāna III.30.57.
    Brahma Vaivarta Purāna. III.30.17.
11. Kūrma Purāna. I 21.19-20.

(b) *Padma Purāṇa*[1] still maintains that the goddess was worshipped by the King *Sumada*, who fought with *Śatrughna* brother of Rāma.

(c) *Kaushalyā*, the mother of Rāma is said to have worshipped *Durgā*, in *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa.*[2]

(d) *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* not only mentions worship of *Durgā* by *Rāma*, but also says that she was worshipped by *Paraśurāma*,[3] and even by *Sītā.*[4]

(e) *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa* of unknown date mentions the worship of *Durgā* by *Rāma* and *Sītā*,[5] along with the offerings of Meat etc. She is also called *Candika*, *Gaurī*, *Śītalā* and *Māheśwarī*.[6]

(f) Some of the *Purāṇas* tell us that the king *Rāvaṇa* of *Laṅkā* was also the devout devotee of *Devī*[7] and there were temples of goddesses in *Lankā* :[8]

(g) According to the popular tradition the two brothers *Rāma* and *Laksamaṇa* were taken to *Pātāla* by *Ahi Rāvaṇa*, for the sake of *Bali* to *Durgā*, but in the meantime *Hanumāna* reached there and saved the life of these princes.

All these references internal and external are sufficient enough to prove that at the time of the *Rāmāyaṇa Śakti* cult was in its popular form though the *Āryan* settlers till this time were not in a mood to absorb the goddess *Durgā* in their own pantheon and they were also not worshipping *Durgā* and *Chandikā*. All the evidences from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, itself prove that the cult of goddess was originally the non-*Āryan* cult which was mingled with the *Āryan* beliefs in later times.

1. Padma Purāna V.12.54-67.
2. Ādhyātma Rāmāyaṇa. II.2.43.
3. Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa, III.30.17; III.45.1-76.
4. Ibid. IV.27.1-192.
5. Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa, Yātrā Kaṇda, 6.76-83.
   Ibid. Rājya Kāṇda (Uttarārdha), 14.88.
6. Ibid. Manohar Kāṇda, 10.89-90.
7. Mahābhāgavata, p. 36.5-9.
8. Ibid. 39.17-21.

*Mahābhārata and Harivanśa Purāṇa*

The cult of *Śakti* attained a great importance in the age of the *Mahābhārata*. Two complete hymns are addressed to her.[1] A study of these hymns reveals that in her character there is a fusion of *Vaiṣṇava* and *Śaiva* goddesses. The *Mahābhārata* says that she is *Durgā* as she rescues people from the difficulties.[2] She is worshipped by the gods for the protection of three worlds. It is said here, "those who bow to you in the morning, would get everything such as progeny and riches.[3]

During the period of the *Mahābhārata* many new names and aspects of the Goddess are introduced. It is also stated in the *Virāt Parvan*[4] that the Mother Goddess takes delight in spirituous liquor, flesh and sacrificial victims. However, we shall summarize the main results of the two hymns devoted to *Śakti* in the Mahabhārata.

In the *Bhīṣma Parvan* there is a prayer by *Arjuna* to *Durgā*. He invokes Reverence to *Siddha-Senāni* (leader of the *Siddhas*). the noble, the dweller on *Mandara*, the *Kumārī*, *Kālī*, *Kapālī*, *Kṛṣṇa-Pingalā*, *Bhadra-Kālī*, *Mahākālī*, *Chandī*, *Chandā*, *Tārini*, *Vara-Varṇinī* (beautiful coloured), fortunate, *Kātyāyanī*, *Karālī*, *Vijayā*, *Jayā*, who bears a peacock's tail for the banner, adorned with various jewels, armed with many spears, wielding sword and shield, younger sister of the chief of cowheids (*Kṛṣṇa*), eldest, born in the family of cow-herds, *Nandā*, delighting always in *Mahiṣa's* blood, *Kauśikī*, wearing yellow garments. loud-laughing, wolf-mouthed, deliverer in battle, *Umā*, *Śākambharī*, *Švetā* (white one), *Kṛṣṇā* (black ene), destroyer of *Kaiṭabhā*, *Hiraṇyākshī*, *Virupākshī*, *Dhumrākshī*, (golden, distorted, dark mouthed) *Veda-śruti* (tradition of the Veda). *Jāta Vedasī* who dwells continually near the mountain precipices and repultures, mother of *Skanda*, divine *Durgā*, dweller in wilderness; *Svāhā*, *Swadhā*,

1. Mahābhārata, IV.6 and VI.23.
2. Ibid. IV.6.20.
3. Mahābhārata, IV.6.19.
4. Ibid. IV.6.17; VI.23.

*Kalā*, *Kāṣṭhā* (minute divisions of time), *Saraswatī*, *Sāvitrī*, Mother of the *Vedas* and the *Vedānta*. Thou goddess are praised with pure heart. By thy favour let me be even victorious in battle, In deserts, fears, difficulties, and in the preservation of thy devout servants, and in Pātāla (netherworld) thou constantly abidest; and conquerest the *Dānavas* in battle, thou art *Jambhāni* (destroyer), *Mohinī*, *Māyā*, *Hri*, *Śrī*, *Sandhyā*, the luminuous *Sāvitrī*, Mother (*Janani*), *Tuṣṭi*, *Puṣṭi*, *Dhṛti*, *Dīpti*, increaser of the moon, the power of the powerful battle, seen by the *Siddhas* and *Chārṇas*.[1]

In the *Vīrāṭa Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, *Yudhiṣṭhira*, one of the five *Pāndavas* invoked the goddess of power who would remove dangers which would occur to her devotees. She is represented in this chapter as the sister of *Hari*[2] born of *Yaśodā* and *Nanda Gopa*. Main points in this hymn are as follows[3] :

Here *Durgā* is said to be the same as *Kṛṣṇa*, as well as she is the feminine side of *Kṛṣṇa*,[4] She is said to have four hands and four faces.[5] Among other weapons she holds the noose, bow and discus. She is praised as *Kumārī* or the maiden.[4] She is addressed as the slayer of *Mahisha*, the buffalow-demon, as *Kālī*, *Mahā Kālī* and *Vindhyavāsinī*.[7] It has been a custom in India to attribute the exploits of one deity to another. The idea was that the different manifestations are after all for a certain definite purpose, and there is really one Devī, who assumes various forms for fulfilling various purposes[8] Sometimes she assumes a malignant form and sometimes a benevolent form.[9]

1. Mbh. VI.23.1-18.
   English trans. Muir, Vol. IV, p. 432-33.
2. Mbh. IV.6.2.
3. Mbh. IV.1.1-26. The whole hymn.
4. Dikshitar, Lalita-cult, p. 27.
5. Mbh. IV.6.8.
6. Ibid. IV.6.14.
7. Ibid. IV.6.15-17.
8. Lalitā-cult, p. 27.
9. Devī-Māhātmya, I.64-66.

In these two hymns and in the *Harivamśa Purāṇa*, *Durgā* is definitely linked with Kṛṣṇa.[1] At the same time, she is more clearly identified with the wife of *Śiva*, and is addressed as *Umā*. These passages usually dated in the 2nd or 3rd century A.D.,[2] go to show that a *Śākta* sect was already well-established. The *Harivaṁśa*, which is a continuation of the epic, dated in the 4th century, also contains references which go to show the popularity of the goddess. She was identified with all the chief deities, and had stolen their chief characteristic epithets.[3]

The aforesaid hymns illustrate in a characteristic manner the various constituent elements of the developed *Śākta* cult. The composite goddess was no doubt made up of such various elements as her Mother, Daughter and Sister aspects. She was constituted of Vedic *Āryan* element in as much as she herself or her particular forms were the objects of worship of the *Āryan* sage clans such as the *Kauśikaṣ* and the *Kātyas* (compare her appellations *Āryā*, *Kauṣikī* and *Kātyāyanī*) and the various non-*Āryan* strands in her character. It is specially mentioned in the *Āryā-Stava*[4] that she was worshipped by the *Śavarās*, the *Barbaras* and *Pulindas*, and she is often described in other contexts as *Aparṇā*[5] (not even covered with a leaf garment, that is nude), *Nagna Śāvari*, (the nude *Śavara* woman) and *Parṇa Śāvari*. She also commanded respect and adoration from the higher classes including the nobles and kings.[6]

The following passage from the *Māhābhārata* gives a graphic description of *Kālī*. When, *Aśvatthāmā* visited the camp of the *Pāndavas* with the intention of destroying them, it is said that the warriors in the *Pāndava* camp saw that embo-

1. A. Avalon, Hymns to the goddess, p. 70-71.
2. Payne, The Śāktas, p. 39.
3. A. Avalon, Hymns to the Goddess, p. 82.
   Harivamśa P. chs. 59 and 166, Muir English trs. vol. IV, p. 433.
4. Harivamśa P. III.3.7.
5. Ibid. 18.17.
6. In the Mahābhārata she is worshipped by Yuddhisthira, Arjuna, Pradumna and Aṣvatthāmā.

diment as representing Death-night (*Kālī*), of black visage, having bloody mouth and bloody eyes, wearing Crimson garlands and smeared crimson unguents, clad in a single piece red cloth, with a noose in hand, and resembling an elderly lady. She was singing a dreadful song and standing erect before their eyes, about to lead away men, horses and elephants, all bound in a rope. She appeared to take away various kinds of spirits, with dishevelled hair and bound together in a chord, and also many powerful car-warriors divested of their weapons.[1]

Again, it is said that in the country of the *Vāhikas* a horrible demoness was worshipped in the populous town of *Sakalapura*, then captial of Madras. She is described as singing a song of the following purpose,[2] on the 14th night of the dark-half of every lunar month, 'O when shall I have the pleasure again of singing (hearing) the songs of these Vāhikas. When shall I have a sumptuous feast of beef, pork, camel's and ass' flesh, as well as of rams and cocks with Gaudiya wine to boot, in the company of the stout and fair Sakal women. Unlucky, indeed is he, who eats no such daintiest, all this is apparently the description of *Kālī* and her worshippers.

The passage is important from another point of view, namely, that it indicates the early origin of the *Śākta* cult in a land which was once occupied by the proto-Indians.[3]

*References to Śākta-Pīṭhas*

In the Vanaparva of the *Mahābhārata* there is mention of various places called as *Devī tīrthas*, and for these places pilgrimage is suggested. The famous *Kāmākhya Tīrtha*[4] (though not very important a place of *Śakti* in the times of *Mahābhārata*), *Śrī Parvata*,[5] place of *Bhīmā*[6] *devī*, *Kālikā Samgam*,[7] *Gaurī Śikhar*[8], a very important *Śākti Pīṭhas* named as Śākamb-

1. Mbh. Sauptika-Parvan, 8.76-78.
2. Ibid. VIII.4.25-26.
3. A. P. Karmarkar, The religion of the Vrātyas, Vol. I, p. 19.
4. Mbh. III.82.105.
5. Ibid. III.85.119.
6. Ibid. III.82. Index of the Mbh. p. 133.
7. Ibid. III.84.56.
8. Ibid. III.84.51.

hari,[1] place of the goddess *Dhūmāvati*,[2] *Śrī tīrtha*,[3] *Devī tīrtha*[4], and last of all *Mātṛtīrtha*[5] are mentioned here.

The Mahābhārata contains passages about the cult of *Śakti*. Expressions like, *Bhagalinga*,[6] *Māheśwarī Praja*[7] (creation of *Māheśwarī*) the *Mātṛkas* and their description,[8] *Bhaga Deva*,[9] all these occur in the *Mahābhārata*. Also the terms *Dikṣhā*,[10] *Yoga*,[11] *Bhūtamātā*,[12] *Śakti*[13] as well as *Mātṛ Gaṇa*[14] do occur in the Mahābhārata. Mention has also been made of *Naramehda*, the human sacrifice, not less than four times in the epic.[15] In the *Sabhā Parva*, it is stated that *Jarā*, a demoness, is installed in every house to keep away the demons, and she is called the Gṛha Devī.[16] Thus all these instances clearly show that the *Śakti* cult had already come into vogue during the period of the Mahābhārata.

*Names* :

Out of the various lists of the names aud epithets of the goddess, following are important from the point of the prevalence of the cult in that period. Most of them are also found in the later developed stages of *Śakti* cult. The list of the names of *Mātṛ Gaṇa* occuring in *Śalya Parvad*[17] includes the following

1. Mahābhārata III.84.13-18.
2. Ibid. III.84.21-22.
3. Ibid. III.83.46.
4. Ibid. III.83.51.
5. Ibid. III.83.58.
6. Ibid. Anuśāsana Parva 58.3.
7. Ibid. 45.217.
8. Ibid. Śalya P. 47.1 ff.
9. Ibid. Āśvamedhika P. 43.15.
10. Ibid. Anuśāsana P. 85.97.
11. Harivamśa P. 18.22.
12. Mbh. Vana P. 3.69.
13. Harivamśa Purāṇa—Bhaviṣya Parva 87.30.
14. Mbh. Śalya P. 44.29.
15. Ibid. III.81.33; IX.28.89; XIII.49.42; XIV.48. See p. 503, Index to the Mahābhārata.
16. Mbh. Sabhā Parva 18.3.
17. Ibid. Śalya P. 46.1-41.

names *Bhadra Kālī*, *Kālikā*, *Raudrī*, *Saumyā*, *Kauberī*, *Vāruṇī*, *Māhendrī*, *Āgneyī*, *Vāyavī*, *Kaumārī*, *Brāhmī*, *Vaiṣṇavī*, *Vārāhī*,[1] (all these along with the thousands of *Bhūtamātās* are described very beautiful but for the enemies they are fierceful. These are of unlimited power, decorated with various ornaments and cloths, habitating in the caves, countries, cemetries, mountains, forests and the crossings, (*Chatuṣpatha Niketanā*).[2] They are found all over the world and propitiated mainly for the destruction of the enemies.[3] Other names mentioned here are *Rudrāṇī*, *Ekānamsā*, *Kūsmāndi*, *Bhīmā*, *Ārya*,[4] *Haimavatī*, *Pārvatī*, *Mahādevi*,[5] *Śaṣṭhī*[6], *Bhadrakālī*,[7] *Ambikā*[8], *Tribhuvaneśvarī*, *Sahasra Nayanā*, *Kirātī*, *Rudrapriyā*, *Jagan* Mātā[9] and so on.

In the *Harivamśa Purāṇa* we are told how *Viṣṇu* with the idea of destroying *Kansa* went to *Pātāla*[10] and sought the aid of the goddess, *Nidrā-rupiṇī*. He asked her to take birth as a daughter of *Yaśodā* to share his glory there. It is also described that the Devi would kill two demons, namely *Śumbha* and *Niśumbha*[11] and she would be worshipped with animal sacrifice.[12]

Vaiśampāyana repeats a hymn to *Āryā* (*Durgā*).[13] It begins with Reverence to *Kātyāyanī* and to goddess *Tribhuvaśwarī*, thus indicating the first flrm step towards Aryanizing the Non-*Āryan*, War goddess, Durgā.[14] Besides repeating the names and epithets mentioned in *Arjuna's* hymn to *Durgā*, she is called

1. Mbh. Śalya P. 46.11, 14, 36-38.
2. Ibid. 46 39-41.
3. Ibid. 46.1-2.
4. Harivamśa P. Vishnu Parva, 109. 50-52.
5. Ibid 91.42.
6. Mbh. Sabhā Parva 11.41.
7. Ibid. Śānti P. 284.55.
8. Harīvamśa Purāṇa (Viṣṇu P.) 74 33.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid. II.2.
11. Ibid. Viṣṇu Parva 120.20.
12. Ibid, 22.53-54.
13. Ibid. 3. 1-28.
14. Ibid. 108.457.

the elder sister of *Yama*, and is said to have been worshipped by non-*Āryan* tribes. She is described as being fond of wine and flesh[1] and is called *Surā Devī* (goddess of wine). She is *Sarasvatī* in *Vālmikī* and *Smṛti* in *Vyās*. She is the science of *Brahman*, the *Veda* and is pervading the whole world.[2] Muir has rightly pointed out that the subject of this passage is but to take *Durgā* and her worship under the patronage of *Viṣṇu*.[3]

Again the hymns addressed to *Durga*[4] by *Pradyumna*, the son of *Kṛṣna*, aud by Aniruddha,[5] the grandson of *Kṛṣṇa*, are examples of the efforts being made for the Āryanisation of the cult. The goddess is here described as being adored by seers and gods with flowers of eloquence[6]. She is called the sister of *Indra*, *Viṣṇu* and *Gautama*.[7] Further it is statedthat even *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Rudra*; the sun, the Moon, the wind and all this world, is pronounced by uttering the name of this goddess.[8] She is said to be worshipped by the *Yādavas* (*Vṛṣṇi-Sangha-Prapujitā*). She is possessing eighteen hands; decorated with divine ornaments. clothes, garlands as well as with the beautiful head-dress.[9] Last of all she is said to be worshipped by the thieves,[10] and her help is sought by them in their highway robbery professions.

The above discussion about the prevalence of the cult of *Śakti* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and *Harivamśa Purāṇa* gives us a picture of the cult, when it was in the process of Āryanization. Considering the association of *Durgā* with mountains, hill tribes, and the *Loka mātās*, world mothers, we may agree that

1. Harivamsa P. Visṇu P. 3.129.
2. Ibid. 3.25.
3. Muir, op. cit. IV. p. 434.
   Harivamśa Purāṇa 1.3.
4. Ibid. (Viṣṇu P.), 108. 5-14.
5. Ibid. 120. 4-47.
6. Ibid. 120.5.
7. Ibid. (Viṣṇu P.) 12. 6-7.
8. Ibid. 120.27-30.
9. Ibid. 120.32-33.
10. Ibid. 22.53-54 and 120.19.

the cult of *Durgā* is primitive and pre-historic and may have started among primitive tribes, but on the grounds of Vedic references to Śaktism and Vedic practices, we have to conclude that it was also Vedic, in the sense that the followers of Vedic religion practised it. We have thus the continuous story of the prevalence of Śakti-cult in the Vedic and the epic times.

1. Dikshitar, Lalita-cult, p. 30.

## CHAPTER II

## ŚAKTI AND ITS DIFFERENT CONCEPTS IN THE MAHĀ-PURĀṆAS

*The Purāṇas.*

The last great authorities in matters of religion are the *Purāṇas* which form the basis of popular Hinduism. All these treatises are supposed to be the work of *Vyāsa*, and orthodox Hindus are shocked at being told that the Purāṇas are the works of sectarian views. The word *Purāṇa*, as it occurs in the *Upaniṣāds*,[1] *Rāmāyaṇa*[2] and the *Mahābhārata*,[3] means legends of Kings and sages. According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*,[4] a *Purāṇa* is ought to contain "accounts of the creation of the universe, its successive generations, geneologies of patriarchs and kings, the *Manvantaras*[5] and the royal dynasties.

Of the five topics of the *Purāṇas*, the first three viz. *Sarga*, *Pratisarga* and *Vaṁśa*, concern early religion and mythology, and the other two viz. *Manvantara* and *Vaṁśānucharita*, deal with traditional history. In both the groups are to be found later amplifications, co-ordination and re-statements. The first three being the general product of speculative thoughts were naturally shaped out and transmitted by religious teachers for general instructions.

*Contents*

Though not as all-comprehensive and as encyclopaedic as the great *Mahābhārata* is, the *Purāṇas* also aim at incorporat-

1. Chāṇdogyopniṣad, III.4.1.
   Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up. II.4.10.
2. Rāmāyaṇa. 4.62.3.
3. Mbh. I.1.86.
4. Kūrma P. I.1,12.
   Viṣṇu P. III.6 16.
   Varāha P. 2.4.
   Matsya P. 53 65.
   Vāyu P. 4.10-11.
   Bhaviṣya P 1.2. 4-5.
5. Bhāratīya Vidyā, May 1941, p. 139.

ing anything and everything in their text answering to '*Yadihāsti tadanyatra yannehāsti Na tat Kvacit*'.[1] The anxiety of the writers of the *Purāṇas* to make their texts all-inclusive would be evident from the definition of the *Purāṇa*, as originally it was described consisted of five topics (Pañca Lakṣaṇa),[2] but later on ten characteristics came to be attached to the *Purāṇas*.[3]

*Date* :

According to the Brāhmanical traditions as recorded in *Atharva-veda*[4] and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*,[5] the *Purāṇa* has as much a sacred origin as the *Vedas*. The former says that the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇa* originated from the residue of the sacrifice.[6] The later ascribes the origin of the four *Vedas*, *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* etc. to the birth of *Mahābhūta*.[7] It is also mentioned in *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*,[8] *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*,[9] *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[10] *Śāṅkhyāyana-Śrautasūtra*,[11] *Gautama Dharma Sūtra*,[12] and *Śatapatha Brahmaṇa*.[13]

These traditions though fundamentally different, are unanimous in their recognition of the sacredness of the '*Purāṇa*'. In many of the works of the Vedic literature, the *Purāṇa* is even called the fifth *Veda*.[14] Though these references by the

1. Mahādhārata XVIII.5.50.
2. Amarakoṣa—I.5.
3. Bhāgavata P. XI 7.9-10.
   Ibid. II.9-44.
4. Av. XI.7-24.
   Ibid. XV.6.4.
5. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up. IV.1.2.
6. Atharva-veda. XI.7.24.
7. Bṛhadāranyaka-Up. II.4.10.
8. Gopatha Brāhmaṇa 1.IO.
9. Taittirīya Āraṇyaka II.9-10.
10. Chāndogya Up. III.4.1 and 2; VII.1,2 and 4; VII.2.1 and 7.
11. Śāṅkhyāyana-Śrauta Sūtra, XVI.2 27.
12. Gautama Dharma Sūtra, VIII.6, XI.19.
13. Śatapatha Br. XIII.4.3.13; XI 5.6.8 and 7.9.
14. Chāndogya Up. VII.1.4.
    Nyāya Bhāsya 4 9.62.

use of singular word, show that there was only one *Purāṇa*,[1] yet it can hardly be derived that more than one *Purāṇa* had not come into existence long before the beginning of Christian era. In the *Saṁhitā* of *Manu* and *Yājnavalkya*[2], and in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*,[3] the word *Purāṇa* has been used in plural number. The *Mahābhārata* speaks of a *Purāṇa* proclaimed by *Vāyu*,[4] and the *Āpastamba Dhar a Sūtra* has a passage quoted from *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*.[5] Now it can be said that the number of the *Purāṇas* had begun to be multiplied even before the time of *Āpastamba*.[6]

These references are sufficient to establish that centuries before the Christian era, the *Purāṇa* as a branch of literature did exist bearing exactly that character which is attributed to it in the extant *Purāṇas*. But it is not possible to hold that the extent *Purāṇas* are the works refferred to in the *Śatapatha*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Śrauta* and *Dharma Sūtras*. Till the time of compilation of the *Mahābhārata*, the extent *Purāṇas* were not in existence, at least in their present shape and form. Again with reference to the mythology of the Hindus as it was by about 140 B.C.; it can be stated that the present *Purāṇas* with their pantheon of new deities could not come into existence in the 2nd century B.C. Because deities like *Durgā*, *Gaṇeśa* and the *Paurāṇika Śiva* were not known to *Mahābhāṣya* of 140 B.C. or to *Manu Saṁhitā*[7]. So the extant *Purāṇas* may probably be the recasts of the ancient *Itihāsa-Purāṇa*, made in the first centuries of the Christian era. The extant *Purāṇas* were composed at a time when there was a re-statement of the

1. Matsya P. 53.
   Ibid. 3.3-4.
   Vāyu P. I.60.
   Padma P. V.1.45.
2. Manu III.232.
   Yājnavalkya III.189.
3. Taittirīya Āranyaka II.10.
   Aṣṭādhyāyī, III.3.105.
4. Mahābhārata, Vana Parva 191.16; XVIII.6.97.
5. Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra, 2.9.24.6.
6. Pargiter, Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 50-51.
7. Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, 1907, p. 337.

Brahmanical religion, philosophy and practices, it was the time when Buddhism and Jainism had begun to show signs of waning. These *Purāṇas* effected a silent revolution in the religious ideas and practices of the people.[1]

Since the present *Purāṇas* radically differ from the Vedic *Purāṇas*, both in mythology and in the narration of the stories, they are new altogether compiled long after the 2nd century B.C. But it can be said definitely that the extant *Purāṇas* having been compiled once, do not seem to have much changed in essential matters. The additions of subsequent ages are to be regarded merely as additions.

But no definite chronology can be fixed in respect of the extant *Purāṇas*. We can put forward the different opinions of the scholars about the approximate date of *Purāṇas* in general :

1. According to the scholar S. D. Gyani, the present form of the *Purāṇas* was complete about the 7th century A.D.[2]

2. Pargiter thinks that the *Purāṇas* were compiled from 400 B.C. to 1000 A.D.[3]

3. C.V. Vaidya maintains that the present form of the *Purāṇa* is an output of the 4th century A D.[4]

4. Bhandarkar and Smith agree in ascribing the Gupta period to the final phase of the *Purāṇa* literature.[5]

5. From A.D. 600 to 900 is the period when the *Purāṇas* were finally edited.[6]

6. R.C. Hazra, a modern Paurāṇika scholar tries to fix the date of the *Purāṇa* on the basis of their materials on the topics of *Lāna*, and *Dharma* etc. He ascribes the date from 3rd century A.D. to 12th century A.D.[7]

1. P. K. Gode, Commeration Vol. part III, p. 71.
2. New Indian Antiquary, Vol. V, 1942-43, p. 135.
3. J.R.A.S. 1914, p. 745.
4. History of sanskrit Literature, Vol. I, Section IV, p.6.
5. Smith-oxford history of India, p. 60
6. J R.A.S. 1912, p. 1050-1053.
7. Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Purāṇic Records on HIndu Rites and Customs, p. 6.

7. P.V. Kane also opines that the present form of the *Purāṇas* is a recast of the older ones made during the first centuries of the Cristian era,[1] and all the *Purāṇas* were in final form upto the end of 7th century A.D.

8. In the opinion of R.C. Majumdar the period from 300 A.D. to 700 A.D. saw the full development of the *Purāṇas*. This view is accepted by K. W. Morgan also.[2]

9. Farquhar holds the view that present form of the *Purāṇas* was under development during the Gupta period.[3]

These opinions of the scholars, if taken in spirit, show clearly that the development of the *Purāṇas* came to an end about 1000 A.D. while it started in the beginnings of the Christian era. It means that the *Purāṇas* are very important from the view point of religion, history and sociology of India during first one thousand years of the Christian era.

*Number* :

The number of the *Purāṇas* or *Mahāpurāṇas* is traditionally said to be eighteen.[4] But there is a difference of opinion about *Vāyu Purāṇa* and *Śiva Purāṇa*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* about the inclusion in the *Mahā Purāṇa* list. Some hold that *Bhāgavata* is a *Mahā Purāṇa* and *Devī Bhāgavata*[5] is an *Up-purāṇa*, while others think vise versa.[6] Similar is the case with the *Vāyu P.* and *Śiva Purāṇa*. We are not indulging ourselves in this discussion and only say that though the number is said to be eighteen but there are twenty books (*Purāṇas*) which come under the title of *Mahāpuraṇas*.

1. P.V. Kane, History of Dharma Śāstra, Vol. I, p. 162.
2. R.C. Majumdar, The Classical Age, Vol. III, p. 291.
   K.W. Morgan, The religion of the Hindus, p.35.
3. J,N. Farquhar, An Outline of the Religious Literature of India, p. 139.
4. Skanda P., Kedāra Khanda—
   Śiva P. 5.41.112; Vāyu P. 3.42.2,11.
   Mārkandeya P. 134.7; Brahm Vai. P., 4.133.22.
   Kūrma P. 1.12.268; Matsya P. 53.11.
   Devī Bhāgavata I.1.3; I.1.17.
5. Shri Kṛṣṇamaṇi Tripathi—Purāna Tattva Mimamsa, p. 4I.
6. Nila kaṇṭha's commentary on Devī Bhāgavata P. I

The order of the eighteen *Purāṇas* is lske thus : 1. *Brahma P.*, 2. *Padma P.*, 3. *Viṣṇu P.*, 4. *Śiva P.*, and *Vāyu P.*, 5. *Bhāgavata P.* or *Devī Bhagavtra P.*, 6. *Nārada P.*, 7. *Mārkaṇḍeya P.*, 8. *Agni P.*, 9. *Bhaviṣya P.*, 10. *Brahma Vaivarta P.*, 11. *Linga P.*, 12. *Varāha P.*, 13. *Skānda P.*, 14. *Vāmana P.*, 15. *Kūrma P.*, 16. *Matsya P.*, 17. *Garuḍa P.*, 18. *Brahmāṇḍa P.*[1]

*Bhāgavata or Devī Bhāgavata* :

Which one is the *Mahāpurāṇa—Bhāgavata* or *Devī Bhāgavata* is the question which has agitated the minds of the scholars for the centuries together. The doubt is due mainly to the fact that etymologically the name is applicable to both the works. The term '*Bhāgavataḥ Idam*' pertaining to the blessed Lord—in which case it applies to the work, *Śrīmadbhāgavatam* as dealing mainly with the deeds of *Śrīkṛṣṇa*. Secondly it can be explained as '*Bhagavatyah Idam*' pretaining to the blessed lady only—in this case it is applicable to '*Devī Bhāgavatam*'[2] as dealing mainly with the deeds of the *Devī* in her several manifestations.

This question has been a bone of contention between the *Vaiṣṇavas* and the *Śāktas* during the last few centuries. So many references are cited in support of both the works by the scholars. *Śiva Purāṇa* cites a verse[3] in support of *Devī Bhāgavatam*. *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* is also of the opinion that *Devī Bhāgavata* is to be iucluded in the great 18 *Purāṇas* and not the *Bhāgavata*.[4]

*Philosophy of the Purāṇas* :

The Pantheism of the *Purāṇas* is one of their characteristics.[5] The particular deity who is all in all, from whom all things proceed, and to whom all things return; can be diversified according to their individual sectarial bias. They seem to have derived the notion from the *Vedas*. But in the *Purāṇas*,

1. Bhāgavata P XII.7.
   Śiva P., 5 44. 125-135; Mārkandeya P. 134 8-11;
   Matsya P. 53.12-55; Skanda I.2.35 69-72.
2. Mahāmahopadhyāya Kuppuswāmi Śāstri Comm. Vol., p. 1-2.
3. Śiva Purāṇa, Venkateshwar Press, Poona, 372.129.
4. Bhaviṣya Purāṇa.
5. Wilson, Viṣṇu P. Eng. Trans. Introduction P.8

the one universal being is of a higher order than a personification of attributes or elements. In the *Purāṇas*, the only one Supreme Being is supposed to be manifested in the person of *Śiva*, or *Viṣṇu* or *Durgā*; either in the way of illusion; or in sport. One or other of these deities is, the cause of all.[1] It is better to agree with the opinion of *Nīla Kaṇṭha*, the commentator of the *Mahābhārata*—that each *Purāṇa* deals with one aspect of *Brahman* and their object is not to lower one deity at the expense of another. These prepare one of the lower stages of religions and philosophical development for the *Advaita*, the goal of all."[2] The explanation seems to be very fair and is supported by the *Purāṇas* themselves.

*Purāṇas* contain all elements of popular Hinduism, viz, rites, ceremonies, vows, modes of worship, heaven, hell, virtues, sins, atonements, pilgrimage, reverence to *Gurus* and *Brahmins* and the like. They preach the cults of *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva* and *Śakti*, and wrangle over the superiority of one. They have great philosophical importance since they treat the nature of *Brahman*, *Prakṛti*, *Puruṣa*, creation and dissolution of the world, bondage, liberation, virtues, vices and the means to liberation. Their philosophy is mainly theistic *Sānkhya*, but it contains absolutism. There is a strong note of pantheism in them. The *Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas* which preach the cults of *Nārāyaṇa* and *Viṣṇu* and *Kṛṣṇa* are theistic. The *Śaiva Purāṇas*—preaching the cult of *Śiva*, *Rudra* or *Paśupati* are monistic with a blend of pantheism and theism.[3] *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, which preaches the cult of *Śakti* is pantheistic with a blend of henotheism, theism and monism. *Devī Bhāgavata*, a *Śākta Purāṇa* is monistic.

All trends of thought are blended together in the *Purāṇas*, though they are consistent with one another. They discuss the nature of *Brahman*, the *self*, the *world*, the relation of the self and the world to *Brahman*, the nature of *Mokṣa*, and the means of attaining it. They inculcate performance of prescribed duties (*Karma Yoga*), devotion (*Bhakti Yoga*), and knowledge or experience of *Brahman* (*Jñāna Yoga*).

1. Wilson Viṣṇu P.Eng. trans. Introduction-p.8·
2. Baij Nath, Hinduism—Ancient and Modern, p. 32.
3. J.N. Sinha, The foundation of Hinduism, p. 129.

The *Purāṇas* did not purport to be *Smṛtis*, though they contained quantities of matter similar to, and in some cases identical with *Smṛti* material. Their very form and style precluded the supposion that they had Vedic authority of a direct character.[1]

The *Purāṇas* are composed chiefly in the simple *śloka* metre and like the *Mahābhārata*, are, very encyclcpedical in their range of subjects. The *Purāṇas* are the history of the gods interwoven with every variety of legendary tradition on other subjects.[2] Viewing them as a whole, the theology they teach is anything but simple, consistent, or uniform. The religion of the *Purāṇas* is practically polytheistic and yet essentially pantheistic. They deal with endless fanciful mythologies, theogonies, cosmogonies, and mythical genealogies. We have a whole body of teaching on nearly every subject of knowledge. The *Purāṇas* pretend to give the history of the whole universe from the most remote ages, and claim to be the inspired revealers of scientific as well as of theological truth. They dogmatize on physical science, geography, the form of the earth, astronomy, chronology, and one or two *Purāṇas*, even deal with a natomy, medicine, grammar and the use of military weapons.[3]

*Concept of Śakti in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*

The *Mākaṇḍeya Purāṇa*—one of the oldest *Purāṇa*, was compiled and edited in its present form in the Gupta period.[4] There is one complete book consisting of 13 chapters named as *Durgā Saptaśati* and *Devī Māhātmya*. Indian religious tradition by common consent bestowed the status of a scripture of the highest sanctity and efficacy on these 13 chapters. The text is of deep soul-stiring value in which the Supreme principle of Reality has been invoked and glorified under the name of *Devī*. The *Devi Māhātmya* is an elaboration of the concept of *Devī* of the Vedic doctrine,[5] of an all powerful Goddess, of

1. J.D.M. Derrett, Purāṇam, Jan. 1955, p. 16.
2. Monier Williams, Indian Wisdom, p. 490.
3. Ibid.
4. V.S. Agrawal, Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa—A Study, p. 19.
5. V.S. Agrawal, Devī Māhātmya, p. 156.

supreme trancendence, as propounded in the *Āṁbhṛṇi Sūkta*[1] and *Dākśāyaṇī Sūkta*.[2]

*Fearful aspect of the goddess.*

The *Purāṇic* text of the *Sapta Śatī* speaks of the goddess *Chaṅḍī*, who represents a consolidated idea of different aspects of the divine truth as divine power. Here the Mother goddess identified as *Umā* or *Pārvatī* is associated with the *Himālayas*.[3] As the Ancient Indian tradition goes, *Umā* as the ancient Mother goddess of India is always a mountain goddess, the most popular epithet applied to her being *Pārvatī*, literally, the maiden pertaining to the mountain. Though she is mainly associated with the *Himālayas*, she is also associated, in her different aspects, with the mountains *Kailāśa*, *Vindhya*, and *Mandara* etc.[4]

The first thing that strikes one about the mother goddess *Chaṇḍi* or *Chaṇḍikā*, as she is depicted in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, is that primarily, if not exclusively, she is a goddess warrior,[5] incarnating herself on earth by using various devices at various crucial moments in order to destroy the demons who were formidable challenges to the denizens of heaven.[6]

Indeed, in her perfect nature, she has been described as the most beneficient; but her fierceness as a martial goddess dominates in the main episodes and we always find her killing the demons. This tradition of the fierce goddess, equipped with the sharpest weapons and revelling in her terror-strking war-cries,[7] is definitely a different tradition from that of *Pārvatī*, *Umā*, whom we always find in an altogether different setting.

*Relation of the goddess—with the Himālayas :*

It is a striking fact that though we find the goddess in this *Purāṇa* described by many of her popular, less popular, and

1. Ṛgveda, 10.125.
2. Ibid. 10.72.
3. Sapta Śati. XI.42.
4. Ibid. XI.42.
5. Ibid. XI.41-55.
6. Ibid. XII.28-30; 23; 15-19.
7. Ibid. IX.31-41.

unpopular names,[1] her most popular name *Umā* is absent. Even the epithet *Pārvatī*, very rarely, is used only in the sense of a goddess residing in the mountain[2] and not in the sense of a daughter of the mountain. It has also to be noticed in this *Purāna*, that the goddess *Chaṇḍikā* is not associated with the *Himālayas* in any intimate way [3] Of the three main episodes narrating the fight of Devī with demons, it is only in third episode that the goddess is described as a maiden residing in a valley of the mountain *Himālaya*.[4] We find that the gods after being defeated, humilated, and oppressed by the demon brothers *Śumbha* and *Niśumbha* went to the *Himālaya*, with a view to approach the goddess *Chaṇḍikā* to help them by killing the demons. Also in the second episode *Himālaya* has been mentioned once, while he presented to *Devī* a lion, as her mount, and other riches.[5] This is all we hear of the *Himālaya* in the whole of the *Devī Māhātmya*.

*Philosophical aspect of Śakti* :

In *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* the goddess *Durgā* is pure consciousness, (*Chiti*),[6] power of *Śiva*,[7] the *Māyā* of *Viṣṇu*.[8] She produces *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*. She is *Prakṛti*, the primal root-evolvent.[9] She is the homogeneous and undifferentiated ground of the universe. She is the creative energy (*Śakti*).[10] She is the omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent creator, preservor and destroyer of the universe. She is immutable, but the world is her mutation. She is devoid of *Guṇas*, but assumes them, and creates the world out of them. She is eternal, assumes the form of time, produces modifications of *Prakṛti*, and also dissolves them in *Prakṛti*. She is of the nature of the universe

1. Sapta Śatī.IX.31-41.
2. Ibid. IX.31-41.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. 5.88; 90; 6.8.
5. Ibid. 2.29.
6. Ibid. V.78-80, V.17-19.
7. Ibid. XI.14.
8. Ibid. V,14,16.
9. Ibid. IV.7; V.9.
10. Ibid XI.11.

(*Viśwātmikā*),[1] the ground (*Viśwāśrayā*) and the ruler of the world (*Viśweśwarī*). She is the omnipotent power of *Viṣṇu* or *Śiva*,[2] cosmic nescience (*Mahāmāyā*)[3] andthe seed of the world.[4]

She is pure consciousness, one and uniform; but through cosmic nescience she assumes the form of the multiform world. She deludes all creatures with *Avidyā*, and entangles them in bondage.[5] She invests them with egoism and attachment and whirls them in the wheel of *Saṅsāra*.[6] She is in the world and transcends it, she prevades the world as pure consciousness; it is her form and manifestation.

*Durgā* is the foundation of the world.[7] She exists in all creatures as the power of *Viṣṇu*, consciousness (*Chetanā*), power (*Śakti*), hunger, thirst, sleep, nourishment, livelihood, beauty, genus, intellect, forgiveness, conscience, memory, reverence, campassion, contentment, fortune, and error. She exists in them as her reflections (*Chāyā*).[8] She is the supreme goddess,[9] the all-pervading conscious power (*Vyāpti Devī*), the eternal mother. She is the presiding deity of their sense-organs.[10] This is the element of Pantheism. She is good fortune of righteous persons, adversity of vicious persons, conscience of the pure in heart, pious persons' faith in God, and virtuous persons aversion to wrong actions.[11]

*Durgā* is called the great saving knowledge (*Mahāvidyā*), cosmic nescience, (*Mahāmāyā*) great recollection (*Mahāmedhā*), great oblion (*Mahā Smṛti*), power of Śiva (*Mahādevī*), power of demons (*Mahāsuri*), as well as agreat delusion (*Mahāmohā*).[12] The pantheistic cencept of the goddess is much more pronounced in this *Purāṇa*.

1. Sapta Śatī. XI.35.
2. Ibid. IX.25; 16; 14.
3. Devi. M. I.77.
4. Ibid. IV.7, XI.6; 4,9-11, 14, 24,33; XII.2,3, I.48,49,51,57,63, 68-73.
5. Ibid. I.53-58.
6. Ibid. XI.31.
7. Ibid. V.13.
8. Ibid. V.14-80.
9. Ibid. XI.24.
10. Ibid. V.77.
11. Ibid. IV.5.
12. Ibid. I.77.

*Durgā* is the highest knowledge (*paramāvidyā*) that leads to release.[1] She is the giver of boons and the embodiment of mercy. She delivers her devotees from distress through her grace and destroys their sins.[2] She gives them wordly prosperity and enjoyment, heavenly happiness and releases from bondage.[3]

She gives wealth, happiness, *Dharma* and *Mokṣa*. She is the supreme goddess,[4] Śivā, the most auspicious, fulfiller of desires, refuge of all, and the deliverer from distress. She is called *Durgā* because she is the boat to cross the imperishable ocean of the world with.[5] She is the logos (*Śabda Brahman*) and origin of the *Vedas*.[6] She is the highest goddess among the gods. She is the Divine Mother who always protects her erring children with loving care.[7] This is the element of theism with a pantheistic bias.

Besides, these lofty philosophical ideas about Devī, there is also a popular conception about her; she is the daughter of the *Himālaya* and *Menāka*. In this *Purāṇa*, though she has different patronomic powers of the gods to combat the *asuras*.[8] She is credited with the destruction of many *asuras* such as *Mahiṣa*, *Madhu* and *Kaitabha* and brothers *Śumbha* and *Niśumbha*. By killing the demon *Mahiṣa* she came to be called *Mahiṣāsuramardinī*.[9]

Though Devī pervades this whole universe yet she frequently incarnates herself on difficult occasions with a view to help Devas in the execution of their divine work.[10] These incarnations in no way put any limitations on her trancendent

1. Saptaśatī I.57.
2. Ibid. X.56-58.
3. Ibid. IV.15-17.
4. Ibid. I.56-58.
5. Ibid. 4.11.
6. Ibid. 4.10.
7. Ibid. 4.17-22; 36-37.
8. Ibid, 2.9-19.
9. Ibid. 3.42-43.
10. Ibid. IV.41-42; I.66.

aspect since she is eternal. In this respect Śaktism admits the doctrine of incarnation. The *Durgā Saptaśatī* says that the goddess is worshipped by the gods for the welfare of the world. "When remembered in difficulties, you remove fear in all beings; when remembered in safety, you give a mind conducive to doing good. You remove the fear of poverty. Except you, none is there with a heart ever flowing with compassion to do good to all."[1]

*War-goddess* :

It is to be viewed that how the goddess came to be latterly connected with the episode of war between the *devas* and the *asuras*. The war, it is now clear both from the *Vedas* and the Zend Avesta, was really the struggle that separated two branches of the Aryan Family, the Parsic and the Indic. The *devas* and the *asuras* originally formed common objects of worship to both the branches. But later on the worshippers—and consequently the gods also—seem to have querrelled and separated from one another. It is the collective power of the *Devas* that figurs as *Chaṇḍī*, *Durgā* or *Kālī*, the destroyer of the *asuras*, in the *Purāṇic* literature.

*Mārkandeya Purāṇa* identifies *Devī* with *Prakṛti*,[2] who is ever auspicious; and the sustaining power. She is eternal as well as the supporter of the universe. She is both fearful and benign.[3] She is called *Durgā* and takes one across in difficulties. She is generally called *Viṣṇumāyā*, who resids in all beings.[4]

She abides in everybody—animate or inanimate in the forms of consciousness, intelligence, sleep, hunger, reflection, power, thirst, forgiveness, modesty, peace, faith, loveliness, good fortune, activity, memory, compassion, contentment, and last of all as mother.[5] Here we are astonished to see that author and devotee is so much faminine-minded that he recites all the nouns in the feminine forms. Poet here emphasizes the importance of Devī by establishing her predominance showing

1. Sapta Śatī. IV.17.
2. Ibid. V.9; I.78.
3. Ibid. V.10; 13; I.81.
4. Ibid. V.14; I.71.
5. Ibid. V.14-80; I.78-82.

all the qualities as her formations, inherent in the beings in one way or other.[1]

*Emergence of Kauśikī* :

Once residing on the *Himālayas* Devī, with an idea of protecting the gods from the demons—parted from her original body[2] and this new goddess was named as *Kauśikī*. The old goddess *Pārvatī* became black in colour while the colour of the new goddess was white. *Pārvatī* was designated as *Kālī* due to her colour and she made her abode in the Himalayas.[3]

The new goddess *Kauśikī* was bearing a very charming form. She was illuminating the quarters with her lustre. She was considered as the jewel of womankind in the world.[4] Demon kings *Śumbha* and *Niśumbha* fell in love with her and desired to marry her. They approached her with a proposal—which was turned down and resulted in a fatal war. Ultimately the goddess became victorious with the help of seven-Mothers, as well as *K.lika*,[8] *Caṇḍikā* and with other manifestations.[5] The *Kauśikī* is again said to be *Nārāyaṇī*, and incarnating in all the other forms.[6]

*Theory of Vibhūtivāda* :

With the Philosophy of Monotheism, is linked theory of *Vibhūtivāda*. As in the *Bhagvadgita* there is a description of *Vibhūtis* in *Sapta Śatī*. Goddess said 'I am all alone in the world here.[7] All these goddesses, are but my own powers (*Vibhūtis*). These are projected by me and also withdrawn by myself, 'whenever it is necessary.'[8] This alone can

1. Saptasati. V.77.
2. Ibid. V.85-87.
   Devī Bhāgavata V.23.2.
3. Saptasati. V.88.
   Devī Bhāgavata V.23.3-4.
4. Sapta Śatī. V.89-92.
   Devī Bhāgavata V.23.5-6 also V.22.43-47.
5. Saptasati. chs. VI-X.
   Devī Bhāgavata V.28.18-32.
6. Saptasati. XI.1-23.
7. Ibid. X.5.
   Bhagvadgīta X.41.
8. Saptasati. X.8.

suffice to establish that there is only one power—the divine goddess, in the world while all others are her formations in part and partials.[1]

All the goddesses, all the ladies, knowledge, intellect, power, everything powerful, charming, attractive, auspicious, fearful, wonderstrucking—being parts and partials of the goddess—are the formation, (*Vibhuti*) of the goddess.[2] In this way the world is a reality, a power inherent in it—and is identified with the goddess.[3] She is Lord of the world—she is world rather.

She is good fortune in the dwellings of the virtuous, and ill-fortune in those of the vicious, intelligence in the hearts of the learned, faith in the hearts of the good and modesty in the hearts of the highborn.[4] She is the power of the gods—Soul of the *Sabda-Brahman*, sustenance whereby life is maintained. She is the supreme destroyer of the pain of all the world.[5]

## *CONCEPT OF ŚAKTI IN DEVĪ BHĀGAVATA PURĀṆA*

The *Purāṇa* opens saying that *Śakti* is beginningless *Brahmavidya* and *Sarva Chaitanyarūpā*,[6] i.e. of the nature of all-consciousness. Here *Śakti* is known as Highest Primal power, as well as *Vidyā* in the *Vedas*, who is omniscient, and controls the innermost of all. The author bows down to her as the Mother of all the worlds, who creates this universe, whose nature is real and unreal both; preserves and destroys the world by her *Sāttvika*, *Rājsika*, and *Tāmasika* powers and in the end resolves all these into herself.[7]

1. Sapta Śatī. XI.6.
2. Ibid. XI.24, 30.
3. Ibid XI.33.
   Ibid. IV.7.
4. Ibid. IV.5.
5. Ibid. M. IV.10.
6. Devī Bhāgavata P. I.1.1.
7. Ibid. I.2.4-5.

Here the author takes a bold step while doubting the creative power of *Brahmā*, who is born from the naval lotus of *Viṣṇu* and *Viṣṇu* himself, who is resting on waters, and says that creator of the world is *Śakti*, power of all and thus supporter of all. She is also *Māyā* composed of three qualities at the time of the creation of the world[1] and also *Nirākāra* or *Nirguṇa Brahman* while liberating the people from the bondage of the world. *Śiva* is said to be beyond *Prākritic* attributes, eternal and omnipresent; similarly she is also without any change, immutable, unattainable by Yoga. She is the refuge of the universe and her nature is said to be *Turiya Chaitanya*.[2]

*Three powers or Division of Śaktis*

*Śakti*—is identified with *Prakṛti* who is said of three types. She assumes the bodies or forms of three goddesses viz.[3]

1. *Mahā Lakṣmi*—as her *Sāttviki* power;
2. *Mahā Sarasvatī* as her *Rājasikī* power;
3. *Mahākāli* as her *Tāmasikī* power.

for the creation of this universe, denominated as *Sarga* (creation).[4] *Viṣṇu* himself declares that she is the creator, and destroyer, as she incites *Brahmā* to create, *Viṣṇu* to protect and *Śiva* to destroy. Rather we should say that she is simultaneously the power of creation, protection, and destruction.[5]

*Śakti*

*Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* mentions the words *Śakti* to denote *Devī*. Author is very much conscious about the literal meaning of the word *Śakti* and thus he interprets *Śakti* as power inherited in the bodies of the different iudividuals, divine or mortals. Everybody in the world, however great he may be, is under the sway of the goddess *Śakti* and is compelled to work according to her wishes. That very power is given different names and epithets according to the action or profession completed by the power viz. creative

1. Devī Bhāgavata P. I.2.6-10; I.3.41a.
2. Ibid. I.2.19.
3. Padma Pūrāṇa. I.35.177-179.
   Shukla (D. N.) Pratimā vigñana—P. 120.
4. Devī Bhāgavata P. I.2.20-21.
5. Ibid. P. I.4.44-61.

power is called *Viṣṇu*. She is called the great *Śakti*, higher than the highest and the cause of all causes.[1]

She is eternal *Mahāmāyā*, the mother of all, and the supporter of all. She is of the nature of *Brahmavidyā*, beyond the *guṇas*, and she is prime *Prakṛti*, who pervades the three *Lokas*, the whole universe, moving and unmoving.[2]

*Mahā Lakṣhmī—manifestation of Śātvikī Śakti*

*Devī Bhāgavata* describes *Lakṣhmī* an incarnate of *Sātvikī Śakti*.[3] The all-auspicious *Devī Bhagavatī* as *Mahlakshmī* is having a beautiful face, calm and quite appearance of unrivalled splendour, who She is of *Sattva Guṇa*, and is surrounded by Her *Vibhūtis*, Her manifestations, Her smiling companions of same age decked with ornaments, wearing divine clothing and holding each in their four divine hands conch-shell, disc, club and lotus.[4] She is surrounded by *Devīs* viz. *Rati*, *Bhūti*, *Mati* and *Tandrā* etc., the personified energies, each possessing a clear distinct form and endowed with a clear distinct feeling. having in their hands divine weapons, and ornaments on the body.[5]

*Mahālakṣhmi* herself reveals her identity to the astonishing *Viṣṇu* and said 'I am one part of that *Parā* and *Nirguṇa-Śakti*. I am possessed of *Sātvikī* power 'Know me as the *Śakti* of *Sattvaguṇa* and call me as *Mahālakṣmī*. You are also *Saguṇa* and possessed of *Sattva*, and I will stay with you for the preservation of the world.[6] So accept me as your *Vaiṣṇavī Śakti*, comprising four hands and three Guṇas.[7]

*Śrī Bhuvaneśwarī*

The presiding deity of the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is *Śrī Bhuvaneśwarī*, the dweller in the *Maṇidvīpa*. She is *prakṛti* as

1. Devī Bhāgavata I.4.40-50; 61.
   Ibid. IX.2.10,9b.
2. Ibid. I.5.48-49.
3. Ibid. I.15.56.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. I.15.60-63.
6. Ibid. I.16.3.
7. Ibid. I.16.10,14.

well as *Brahman*, she is resting or playing with *Puruṣa*. She is with or with out attributes, and of the nature of universal consciousness. It is said in the words of *Vyāsa* 'O *Devī*, when *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Maheśa*, *Varuṇa*, *Kuvera*, *Yama* and *Agni* were not, thou alone existed then. When there existed no waters, *Vāyu*, Ether, Earth and their *guṇas*, taste : smell etc. when there were no senses, mind, intellect, pride, when there existed no sun, moon nor anything, You alone existed.[1]

O Mother you hold all these visible *Jīva Lokas* in the cosmic *Hiraṇya-Garbha*, and bring out this *Hiraṇyagarbha*, the sum total of the subtle bodies along with *guṇas*, to a state of equilibrium named *Sāmyāvasthā* and remain quite independent and apart for a *Kalpa* period.'[2]

The *Purāṇa* describes the divine lady sitting on the cot, wearing a red garment and a garland of red flowers and bedewed with red sandal paste. Her eyes were dark-red and that beautiful faced, red-lipped lady looked more beautiful than ten millions of lightnings and lustrous like the Sun. The *Bhagavatī-Bhuvaneśwarī* was sitting with a sweet smile on her lips and holding in her four hands noose, goad, and signs indicating as if she was ready to grant boons and asking her devotees discard all fear.[3] Even the birds of that place repeat the mystic incantation *Hrīṁ* and serve that lady, who is of the colour of the rising Sun, all merciful and in the full bloom of youth. That lotus-faced smiling lady was adorned with all the beauties of Nature. Her high breasts defied the lotus-bud. She was holding various jewelled ornaments e.g. armlets, bracelets, diadems, etc.[4]

Her lotus-face looked exceedingly beautiful with jewelled ear-rings of the shape of the *Śrī Yantra*. *Hṛllekhā* and other devine-girls were surrounding Her. These friends were on the four sides always chanting hymns to *Maheśwarī*, the lady of the world. She was surrounded on Her all sides by

1. Devī Bhāgavata II.7.59-62.
2. Ibid. P. II 7.63.
3. Ibid. III.3.37-46 48-49.
   Ibid. II.7 60-64.
4. Ibid. III 3.37-46.

*anaṅgakusumā* and other *Devīs*. She is sitting in the middle of the *Ṣaṭkoṇa Yantra*. She assumed the form of a lady having thousand eyes, thousand hands and thousand feet.[1] *Viṣṇu* described her as—the *Devī Bhagavatī*, *Mahāvidyā*, *Māyā*, undecaying and eternal; the *Prakṛti*, the cause of all, inconceivable to those who are of dull intellects. She is eternal *Brahman* and non-eternal Māyā. She is the will-force of the supreme-self and creatrix of this world.[2]

She is *Yogamāyā* eternal, having *Parā*, *Aṅkura*, pose of *Varadāna* and *Abhaya* in her hands, she is of red colour and having charming personality.[3] Once in the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Devī Śrībhuvaneśwarī* is said to be riding on a swan and having four Vedas with her, wearing a garland of white pearls, all this represents the goddess Saraswatī but she is also having three eyes, the symbol of *Durgā*. This is her one of the *Saumya* forms.[4]

In *Maṇidvipa*, *Devī Bhuvaneśwarī* is sitting on the left side of *Śiva*. She is decorated with various types of ornaments. Her palaces are looking lovely due to the natural scenery, flowers, leaves etc. She is possessed of all the best qualities of the charming personality, having four hands and three eyes. She is surrounded and served by the divine damsels, gods, embodiment of powers, and the *Pīṭha Śaktis*.[5]

*Maṇi Dwīpa*

In this *Purāṇa* the description of *Maṇi Dwīpa* and the goddess living there is a new one. In a very nice way the *Purāṇa* has symthesised all the different concepts of Devi, fearful or *Saumya*, boon-giver or war goddess—removing fear as well as destroying demons. *Maṇi Dvīpa* is well equipped with all the luxurious articles and is constructed in a very beautiful way. *Bhuvaneśwarī* is the presiding deity, surrounded by all other goddesses and gods.[6]

1. Devī Bhāgvata P. III.3.48.
2. Ibid, III.3.51-53.
   Ibid. III.4.27-49.
3. Ibid. IV.19.8-9.
4. Ibid. VI.8 57-62.
5. Ibid. XII.12.17-39.
6. Ibid. XII.10-12.

Groups of goddesses in Manidwīpa are mentioned in the following way :

1. *Nāyikā* and *Kalās—Pingalākṣī, Viśālākṣhī* etc.—64 in number. All these were army generals well equipped to destroy the demons.[1]
2. Group of 32 *Devis* including *Kāla Rātri, Bhadra Kālī, Mahiṣāsura-Mardinī*, these are also ready for fight and are possessed of extra-ordinary power.[2] viz:—*Indrāṇī, Nārāyaṇī, Ambikā* etc.
3. Group of eight mothers alongwith their vehicles.[3]
4. Group of 16 *Śaktis* including *Durgā*.[4]
5. Group of 8 *Devīs* as ministers.[5]
6. Group of *Peeth Śaktis*.[6]
7. All the forms of *Gaurī*—whose detailed account is given in *Āgamas*.[7]
8. All the different incarnations or manifestations of Devī.[8]
9. All the *Mahāvidyās*.[9]

While describing this *Maṇi Dwīpa*—poet says—that all the powers, wealth, all the love sentiments, all types of clothings, all the splendour, fire, energy, beauty and brilliance, the omniscience, the indomitable strength, all the excellent qualities and all mercy and kindness are present here. The all comprehending bliss and the *Brahmānand* can always be witnessed.[10]

All the inhabitants of this place are full of youth, enjoying the life and they worship *Śrī Bhuvaneśwarī*. They have already attained identification with the goddess.[11]

1. Devī Bhāgavata. XII.11.3-20.
2. Ibid. XII.11.25-36.
3. Ibid. XII.11.57-59.
4. Ibid. XII.11.67.72.
5. Ibid. XII.11.75-82.
6. Ibid XII.12.34-36.
7. Ibid. XII.11.92.
8. Ibid. XII.11.105-107.
9. Ibid. XII.11.106.
10. Ibid. XII.12.67-69.
11. Ibid. XII.12-50-53.

*Śakti as Vaiṣṇavī and Sānkarī* :

It is said that all the goddesses whether belonging to *Viṣṇu* or *Śiva* are identically one. There is a passage in *Devī Bhāgavata*[1] where the poet describes her as *Vaisnavī* as well as *Śānkarī* simultaneously, identifying her with the same almighty power who creates and destroys the world.[2]

As *Vaiṣnavī* she is having *Conch*: *Chakra*, *Gadā* etc. in her hands[3]—the weapons held by *Viṣnu* in his four hands. She is residing in the heart of *Viṣnu*, she is *Mahāmāyā*.[4] She is said to be the elder sister of *Kṛṣna*, daughter of *Nanda*,[5] as well as *Nārāyanī*.[6] She is also called *Kamalā*[7] and has been ascribed with the job of nourishment or protection[8] which is ascribed to *Viṣṇu*—in male trinity.

*Śankarī* :

She is *Śivā* and beloved of Śiva.[9] She is the cause of the world. She is residing with *Śiva* on the Mount *Kailāsa*.[10] *Tryambakā* and *Gauri*, all these adjectives of *Devī*[11] prove that she is the power of *Śiva*. She is identified with *Umā*, *Girijā* and *Satī*, daughter of *Dakṣḥ*.[12] and she is ascribed with the job of destruciion of the world—the job of *Śiva*.[13]

However poet is successful in combining in her the qualities of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, sometimes only by adjectives and sometimes saying that these are the *Brahmī*, *Māheśwarī*, *Vaiṣṇavī* forms of Devī.[14] More important is that whom-

1. Devī Bhāgavata. VII.1.21-35.
2. Ibid. VIII.1.23.
3. Ibid. VIII.1.24.
4. Ibid. VIII.1.26.
5. Ibid. VIII.1.27.
6. Ibid. VIII.1.28.
7. Ibid. VIII. 1.32.
8. Ibid. VIII.1.17.
9. Ibid. VIII.1.25-26.
10. Ibid. VIII.1.26.
11. Ibid VIII.1.28.
12. Ibid. VIII 1.32.
13. Ibid. VIII. 1.17.
14. Idid. VIII.1.30
    Devī Māhātmya. 8,12-15, 17.

soever she belongs or pertains, her main and common epithets are *Sarva-Mangala-Māngalyā*, *Sarvārtha-Sādhikā*, *Śaraṇyā*, *Sarva-Deva-Nutā*, *Jagan-mātā*, *Mahotsavā*, *Trilok-vandyā*, *Lokeśī*, *Mahā-māri-bhaya-harā*, *Chaitanyā*;[1] which show that she was the mother of the world with all the affectionate qualities and thus was worshipped and loved by everyone.

*Mahāmāyā—Brahma Vidyā*

Here we notice that the author calls her both as *Mahāmāyā* and *Brahma-Vidyā*.[2] These two contradictory epithets ascribed to Devī show that while creating the world she is *Mahāmāya*, *Yogamāyā*, *Māyā*, *Viṣṇumāyā*, a power which can puzzle the man in the world, and it can only be tackled with the help of *Brahmavidyā*, she herself. Philosophically this means that there is only one entity, viz. *Śakti*, which pervades the whole universe. For a worldly man she is *Mahāmāyā*—veiled in forms and action. Her ends and beginnings are not known,[3] and she is powerful to do anything. But if a person wants to realise her nature, form, actions, and power then she is very generous to disclose her nature to the person. This is nothing but *Brahma-Vidyā*. Poet here wants to disclose her oneness in diversity. This is the great power, to be realised and appreciated by both, the worldly man and the student of divine knowledge—*Brahma-Vidyā*.

The *Mahāmāyā* can be comprehended by *Jñāna* alone. She is beyond the *Guṇas*. She is the receptacle of all the things, *Prāṇa* of the living being. She is *Buddhi*, *Lakṣmī*, *Śhanti*, *Śraddhā*, *Medhā* (intellect), *Dhṛti*, and *Smṛti* (recollection). Vedas say 'Thou art the Bindu (m) over the *Praṇava* (ओं), *Vyākṛti*, *Jayā*, *Vijayā*, *Dhātrī* (the supportress) modesty, (fame) desire, and *Dayā* in all beings.[4]"

When thou dost will to create this visible universe, thou createst first *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśa* and makest them to

1. Devī Bhāgavata. VIII.1.24-36.
2. Ibid. I.5.51.
3. Ibid. I.15.27-33.
4. Devī Bhāgavata I.5.53-55. Eng. translation by Swami Vijnanananda.

create, preserve and destroy the universe; but thou remainest quite unattached[1] to the world." She ever remains constant in Her own form, not known even to the divinities.[2] Even the Vedas bear testimony that she created this universe, herself remaining unchanged.

*Śakti as cause* :

She is the prime cause of the universe. She is also said to be the cause of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and *Ākāśa*. She is also the cause of form, taste, smell, sound and touch. The five *Jñanendriyas* (organs of perception) viz:—eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin and five *Karmendriyas* (organs of action) viz:—hands, feet, speech, arms and the organ of generation are all created by her.[3] It is she who is the *Nimitta cause* as well as *Upādāna cause* of this world and others are only nominal causes.[4]

The *Ādya Śakti*, the prime force, transcends all the *Guṇas*, though she is the substratum of all the *Guṇas*.[5] In the words of *Viṣṇu* to *Brahmā*, the prime force is described thus "Think yourself once of the primordial force, the auspicious *Bhagavatī Ādyā Śakti* who is reigning everywhere as the cause and effect and you will be able to understand everything.[6] My presiding deity is that inmeasurable eternal *Mahā Sakti*, *Brahma-mayī*; by whose *Śakti*, on this ocean rests the whole universe. She creates this entire universe, moving and non-moving. The Devī, the giver of boons, become graciously pleased, the human beings become free of all the bondage of the world, and again that highest eternal wisdom, the cause of *mukti*, becomes the source of bondage to this

1. Devī Bhāgavata I.5.56-58.
2. Ibid. I.5.60-61.
3. Ibid. I.5.94-95.
   Ibid. I.7.27.
4. Ibid. IV.15.35.
5. Ibid. I.16.14-15.
6. Ibid. I.16.24-25.

world, for those who are deluded by her.[1] She is the *Īśwarī* of the lords of the world. *Brahmā*, and all other beings of this universe are born of her (consciousness) power and Her alone.[2]

*Reality of the universe.*

The *Karma* is the sole cause in the production of this universe, This universe moveable and unmoveable, is real, but *munis* though absorbed in meditation to find out the reality, cannot ascertain whether this is real or unreal, if *Māyā* is there, the universe also exists. Because *Māyā* is eternal and always acts as the prime cause of all and so the universe is also eternal.[4] It is said that whatever is seen in the world is a visible form of Devī. By knowing this concept, the devotee must always think that she is identical to it.[5]

Like *Vedanta*, in Śaktism also the devotee has to realise himself as the deity. He has to abolish the imposed difference between him and the deity. Like, the great *Vākyas Tattwamasi*, *So'ham*, *So'smi*, *Brahmāsmi* etc. we have the *Vākyas*—*Aham Devī*. *Sāsmi* etc[6] in this Purāṇa also.

*Māyā*

*Māyā* is great, having unconquerable powers to her credit. No body in the world can overpower her, even the gods like *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* etc.[7] That *Mahāmāyā* is creating, preserving and dissolving this world by time, *Karma* and Nature and other effieint causes. She is inconceivable and unapproachable.[8] As a magician makes the wooden dolls dance in his hands at his hands at his will, so this world-enchanting *Māyā* is making this world, moving and non-

1. Durgā Saptaśatī. I.43.44.
2. Devī Bhāgavata P. I.16.28.
3. Ibid. IV.2.13.
4. Ibid. IV.2.14-16.
5. Ibid. XII.7.13,18.
6. Ibid. XI.1.45-56.
7. Ibid. VI.31.19-20.
8. Ibid. VI.31.21-22.

moving, dance from *Brahmā* down to the blades of grass and all human beings.[1] All the embodied beings labour under the directions of *Māyā, never can they* work independently.[2]

*Bhuvaneśvarī as the controller of Māyā.*

The goddess *Śrī Bhuvaneśwarī* is the Highest essence, the *Samvit* or the universal pure consciousness—in whom resides *Māyā*. Goddess stimulates *Māyā* and makes her to reside in the hearts of the *Jīvas*.[3] Whenever she becomes gracious due to meditation, worship and devotion—she liberates the *Jīvas* giving them Her realisation and drawing Her own *Māyā* from them.[4] This whole cosmos (universe) is nothing but *Māyā* and she is (the goddess) of the nature of consciousness, Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. She is beautiful one in the three worlds. the *Śakti* is the lord of *Māyā* and thus is called *Śrī Bhuvaneśvarī*, the great lady of the world [5]

No other god can remove *Māyā* other than the goddess *Bhuvaneswarī*. As the darkness can be removed only by the sun; the moon, the lightning or fire and not by darkness it self similarly the *Māyā* can be removed by the worship of Devi—the lord of *Māyā*.[6]

*Nature of Devī*

This Devī is the great *Mahāmāyā*, the highiest *Prakṛti*. It is she that devours everything at the end of a *Kalpa*. This auspicious *Devi* is the creator of all the worlds and the *dyaus*. She is the embodiment of the three qualities, endowed with all the powers. She is *Tāmasi* i.e. is the destructrix of the whole world. She is unconquerable Imperishable, and Eternal. She is the *Sandhyā* and the refuge of the *devas*. She is the mother of the *Vedas*, all-knowing and always manifested. This undecaying lady is void of any Prākritic attributes, though she at times possesses attributes. She is

1. Devī Bhāgavata. VI.31.29-31.
2. Ibid. VI.31.46-47.
3. Ibid. VI.31.48-49.
4. Ibid. VI.31.50-51.
5. Ibid. VI.21.51-52.
6. Ibid. VI. 31.53-56.

success incarnate and bestows successto all, she is bliss Herself and gives bliss to all. She is *Śuddha Tattva* and she bids all the *devas* to discard all their fears.[1]

*Śivā.*

It is an auspicious and benign form of *Śakti*. *Devī* in the form of *Śivā* is *Saguṇā*, a manifestation of *Nirguṇā Śakti*. She is having devine form. charming personality, riding on a lion, her traditional vehicle, who is the embodiment of crude (beastly) power guided by intellect in the form of Devī. She is called *Tāriṇī* one who makes the devotees to cross the ocean of the world. She seems to be intoxicated by drinks and having red eyes.[2]

*Devī full of compassion*

In *Devī Bhāgavata* we find the benign aspect of the goddess, always helping the devotees and the poor, helpless creatures and punishing the wicked fellows. Generally we see in this *Purāna* that *Devī* herself did not kill any wicked person or demon but she made others powerful enough to destroy the power of the demons.

A devotee named as *Sudumna* says, "Thy heart is full of unbounded mercy, for those dost certainly feel compassion who are full of devotion towards thee. Thy glories and thy compassion towards the distressed and poor and helpless people—astonish me."[3] Her form here is described as world renowned benignant form granting grace and benefit to all the *lokas*[4] and even granting *Mukti* to the people.

*Devī as boon-giver*

In Devī Bhāgavata, Devī is said the mother of the world and the lady of all. She is attributeless *Bhagavatī*, *Ambikā* and also known as *Kātyāyani*, the giver of the desires, who feeds everybody in the world with her milk, the *Śivānī*, the giver of all happiness—without worshipping whom the person

1. Devī Bhāgavata. V.27.19-22.
2. Ibid. I.12.31-39.
3. Ibid. I.12.45.
   English translation by Swami Vijñanananda. p. 43-44.
4. Ibid. I.12.41.

cannot get happiness in the world.[1] Poet says that when I see persons living in the luxurious lives and travelling in cars and surrounded by pleasures and enjoying the beautiful women—in my opinion they worshipped thee in their previous births and are enjoying the fruits of it.[2] The devotees always live in the ocean of bliss, being always free from the pangs of this *Saṁsāra*.[3]

*Virāṭ-Swaroopa*

The *Purāna* mentions the cosmic form of the *Śakti* when praised by gods, goddess had shown her Virāṭa-Swaroop.[4] to the gods. Description is like thus :

1. The Gods saw her highest *Virāṭa* form. The *Sattva Loka* sittuated on the top is her head.
2. the sun and the moon are her eyes.
3. The quarters (*Diśas*) as her ears.
4. the Vedas as her words.
5. the universe is her heart.
6. the earth is her loins.
7. the *Bhuvar-loka* is her navel.
8. the asterisuous (*jyotiścakra*) is her chest.
9. the *Mahar loka* is her neck.
10. the *Jana loka* is her face.
11. the *Tapa loka* is her head (situated below the *Sattva. loka*).
12. *Indra* and the *devas* and *Swarloka* are Her arms.
13. the sound is the organ of Her ears.
14. the two *Aśvina* are her nose.
15. the smell is her organ of smell.
16. the fire is Her face.
17. day and night are like her two wings or eye lids.
18. the four faced Brahmā is her eyebrows.
19. water is her palate.
20. the juice is Her organ of taste.

1. Devī Bhāgavata P. II.6.34-35.
2. Ibid. IV.15.20-21.
3. Ibid. IV.15.19.
4. Ibid. VII.33.23-34.

21. *Yama* the god of death is Her teeth.
22: *Māyā* is her smile.
23. Creation of universe is her side locks.
24. Modesty is her upper lip.
25. Covetousness is her lower lip.
26. Righteousness (*Dharma Mārga*) is her back.
27. The *Prajāpati* is her organ of generation.
28. The oceans are her bowls.
29. The mountains are her bones.
30. The rivers are her veins.
31. The trees are hairs of her body.
32. Youth, virginity and old age are her best gaits, position or paths.
33. The clouds are her handsome hair.
34. Two *Sandhyās* are her clothings.
35. Hari is her *Vijnāna Śakti* (knowledge).
36. *Rudra* is her all destroying power.
37. The houses and animals are Her loins.
38. Lower *Lokas* are her lower limbs of the body.
39. The wind is very life.
40. The moon is the mind of the Mother of the universe.

This *Virāṭa* form is the fierceful aspect of the goddess. The gods began to behold Her cosmic (*Virāṭa*) appearance with eyes wide awake, with wonder. Thousands of fiery rays emitted from her form; she begain to lick the all horrible sounds; fires came out from her eyes; various weapons were seen in her hands, the *Brāhmanas* and the *Kṣatriyas* became the food of that Awful deity. Thousands of heads, eyes and feet were seen in that form. It was so terrific that all the gods fainted having looked that form.[1] Afterwards coming to senses they requested the Devī to withhold her fearful cosmic form and to show the very beautiful form. Then Her body became soft and gentle, in one hand she held the noose, and in another the goad. The two other hands made signs to dispel all

1. Devī Bhāgavata P. VII.53.35-38.

their fears and ready to grant the boons. Her eyes were emitting rays of kindness and Her face was adorned with beautiful smiles.[1]

*Philosophy of Devī Gītā.*

*Devī-Gīta* is a part of *Devī-Bhāgavata Purāna*[2] preaching the cult of *Śakti*. It conceives of God as the Divine Mother.[3] She is *Parabrahman*, *Ātman*, pure consciousness and bliss. *Parabrahman* has a power (*Śakti*) called *Māyā*, which is neither existent nor non-existent, nor both but different from them. *Māyā* is a positive entity and always exists in *Brahman* and *Ātman* as heat exists in fire.[4] It conceals the nature of *Brahman*, and is a defect (*Doṣa*). *Brahman* in conjunction with *Śakti* is the seed of the world.[5] *Māyā* is the material cause of it, since it is modified into it. It is also the efficient cause in conjunction with *Brahman* or pure consciousness (*Chaitanya*). *Māyā* is called *Pradhānā*, *Prakṛiti*, *Śakti* or *Avidyā*. The Śaivas call it *Vimarśa*. It is unconscious because it is known. What is known (*Dṛśya*) is unconscious. *Māyā* is nonexistent as it destroys knowledge.[6]

*Brahman* or *Ātman* or pure consciousness is the only reality.[7] Pure consciousness cannot be known. If it was known, it would be unconscious. Consciousness is self manifest, it is not manifested by any other entity. It is not manifested even by himself, since it cannot be both; subject and object. It manifests other objects, but it is not manifested by any other entity. Consciousness is eternal. It never lapses in waking state, dream and deep sleep, in which objects are not always known.[8] *Ātman* or *Brahman* is the witness or an embodiment of conciousness. He is eternal bliss, Absolute, detached and unrelated, since all other entities are false appearances.[9]

1. Devī Bhāgavata P. VII.33.53-56.
2. Ibid. VII.31-40.
3. Ibid. VII.28.20.
4. Ibid. VII.32.3-5.
5. Ibid. VII.32.7.
6. Ibid. VII.32.9-12.
7. Ibid VII.32.2.
8. Ibid. VII.32.13-18.
9. Ibid. VII.36.13-14.

He is infinite and unlimited. Knowledge is not its quality. If it were a quality, it would be unconscious. But knowledge cannot be unconscious, it is consciousness alone and it cannot differ from consciousness. So knowledge or consciousness is the essence of *Brahman* or *Ātman*.[1] He is perfect, absolute, non-dual-being, consciousness and bliss.[2] *Brahman* has the power of will (*Icchā Śakti*) power of knowledge (*Jnāna Śakti*) and the power of action (*Kriyā Śakti*).[3] He creates the world with the help of *Māyā*.

*Prakṛti*, *Avyakta* or *Māyā* is the material cause of the world and the power of *Brahman*. *Māyā* is composed of three *guṇas* viz. *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. *Īśvara* is the reflection of *Brahman* in *Māyā*.[4] He is the Omniscient and Omnipresent creator of the world. The individual self (*Jīva*) is the reflection of *Brahman* in *Avidyā*.[5] The causal body, the subtle body and the gross body are produced by *Avidyā*. *Ātman* limited by *Avidyā* or the causal body is *Prajñā*. *Ātman* limited by subtle body is *Taijas*, and *Ātman* limited by gross body is *Viśva*. *Brahman* limited by *Māyā* and composed of *Sattva* is *Īśvara*; *Brahman* limited by undifferentiated names and forms is *Sutrātmā*, and limited by gross world is *Virāṭ*. *Īśvara* impelled by the power of *Brahman* created the world of diverse objects for the experience of finite souls.[6]

The world is an imaginary coustruction of the power of *Māyā* of *Brahman*. Performance of duties, right knowledge, and devotion, are the various paths to liberation. The path of devotion is the easiest, as it is mental, and does not torment the body.[7] A devotee knows deity as non-different from him through primary devotion. He worships the Divine Mother with single-minded devotion and feels a rapture of joy. He medi-

1. Devī Bhāgavata P. VII.32.20.
2. Ibid. VII.32.21.
3. Ibid. cf. Sharma; T.R; Studies in the sectarian upaniṣads. P. 21.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. VII.32.45b-46.
6. Ibid. VII.32.47-50.
7. Ibid. VII.37.2-3.

tates on her alone and thinks of nothing else.[1] This is called *Parā Bhakti.* The highest stage of devotion is knowledge and the highest stage of detachment also is knowledge.[2] *Brahman* is eternal conciousness in the inner core of every heart. One who knows *Brahman* becomes *Brahman.*[3] Knowledge of identities, devoid of distinction, leads to release. *Mokṣa* is the realisation of Brahmanhood. Performance of prescribed duties purifies the mind, and prepares it for the advent of knowledge. Knowledge only is the means of attaining salvation.[4] It is aided by devotion and *Yoga*. *Karma* detachment and purity of mind are subsidiary to it though *Śaktism* advocates pure monism, it finds a place for devotion as a means to the attainment of the knoledge of identity.[5]

*Śakti* in this *Purāṇa* is called eternal and Supreme Goddess and the ultimate cause of all causes.[6] *Śakti* is said to exist in all things, and is justly held that a being, when stripped of Sakti, is no better than a dead body which show that *Śakti* reigns supreme everywhere, the *Devī-Bhāgavata* has dilated upon the story of '*Umā-Indra*'[7] as it occurs in the *Kenopaniṣad.* This *Purāṇa* has touched upon the cardinal point of Śaktivāda when it laid down that *Śakti* represents both *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, there being essentially no difference between the two. Just as power of burning is not distinguishable from fire, so *Śakti* or *Paramā Prakṛti* is inseparable from *Parama Puruṣa* (Supreme Being).[8] A point has also been noticed regarding the personification of *Śakti*. The *Devī bhāgavata* says: Though *Śakti* in its absolute aspect is formless, yet it has got to assume visible forms only for the sake of showing grace to the devotee.[9]

1. Devī Bhāgavata P. VII.37.13-25.
2. Ibid. VII.37.28.
3. Ibid. VII.37.32.
   Ibid. VII.34.38.
4. Ibid. VII.37.31-32.
   Ibid. VII.86.3-16.
5. Ibid. VII.34.48-50.
   Ibid. VII.37.14-30.
6. Ibid. 12.8.
7. Ibid. XII.8.11-45.
8. Ibid. IX.38.28.
9. op. cit.

*Śakti as found in other Mahā Purāṇas.*

Having discussed the concept of *Śakti* in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* and Devī *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the compendiums of *Śakti*-worship, now we will peep into the other *Purāṇas*, not directly related to *Śakti*-worship. As far as the *Śaiva Purāṇas* viz. *Skanda Purāṇa*, *Śiva Purāṇa*, *Kūrma Purāṇa*, and *Linga Purāṇa* are concerned, ample material is available pertaining to *Śakti*. These *Purāṇas* do not give independent status to *Śakti*, but only stote that she is the power of *Śiva* and consort of *Śiva* and thus not separate from him. To our enough astonish ment we get the references for *Śakti* worship even in the *Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas*, like *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Vāmana* etc. In these *Purāṇas*, *Śakti* is the power of *Viṣṇu* and in one way or other it is related to the deity of *Vaiṣṇavism*. We will treat thc *Purāṇas* in the following order : *Vāyu Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Agni Purāṇa*, *Brahma Purāṇa*, these four are considered the oldest *Purāṇas*. Then *Matsya Purāṇa*, *Kūrma Purāṇa*, *Śiva Purāṇa*, *Skanda Purāṇa* (*Sūta Saṁhitā*); these contain the philosophical concepts of Śakti. Then *Nārada Purāṇa*, *Varāha Purāṇa*, *Vāmana Purāṇa*, *Liṅga Purāṇa*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* and last of all *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*.

*Origin of Umā and Kālī—Vāyu Purāṇa*

In the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, it is said that *Umā* was born of *Menakā*, and the very name was given by her mother banning her to make penance.[1] She is *Rudrāṇi*, excels others due to her qualities.She is possessed of the great power of *Yoga* and was married to *Śiva*.[2] *Śiva* who was honoured by all the gods, honoured *Durgā* and requested her to be born as a *Rudrāṇī* to safeguard the interests of the *Brāhmaṇas*,[3] the pillars of Aryan Culture, and to control whole of the world by her *Yogika* powers.[4] She is identified with *Prakṛti*, the sole cause of the creation.[5]

Here, first time, we hear that *Devī* manifested herself in two forms, white and black or to say benign form as well as

1. Vāyu P. 72.10-12.
2. Ibid. 72.16, 20.
3. Ibid. 23.10.
4. Ibid. 23.9.
5. Ibid. 23 56.

fearful form—*Gaurī* and *Kālī*.[1] She is said here as *Paramā Vaiṣṇavī*[2] and from her anger orginated *Mahākālī* surrounded by *Bhūtas* and performing ferocious actions.[3] Mention is here also made of nine *Durgās*[4] and a temple of *Devī*.[5]

*Vāyu Purāṇa* mentions more than fifty names of the goddess. It also prescribes recitation of Names at the time of difficulties.[6] Names of *Devī* are grouped in two; First group consisting the names of *Devī* in *Dvāpara* age and other group gives the names of *Devī* at the end of *Dvāpara* age.[7]

Most important names of Devī are : *Mahāvidyā*. *Lakshmī*, *Saraswatī*, *Aparṇā*, *Umā*, *Haimvatī*, *Saṣṭhī*, *Kalyāṇī*, *Gaurī*, *Āryā*, *Prakṛti*, *Raudrī*, *Durgā*, *Bhadrā*, *Kālarātri*, *Mahāmāyā*, *Revatī*, *Bhūtanāyika*.

The following names are probably the names of *Nava Durgās*[8] :

*Gauṭamī*, *Kauśikī*, *Chaṇḍī*, *Kātyāyanī*, *Satī*, *Kumārī*. *Yādavī*, *Devī*, *Varadā*, *Kṛṣṇa Pingalā*, *Śūla-Dharā*, *Parama Brahma Cāriṇī*, *Māhendrī*, sister of Indra, daughter of *Vrisha*, *Aparājitā*, having many arms, *Pragalbhā*, riding on lion, *Ekānamśā*, killer of demons, *Māyā*, destroyer of *Mahiṣāsura*, *Amoghā*, and residing in *Vindhyas*, all these may be considered as manifestaiions of *Bhadrakālī* (*Vikarāṇi*) or names of *Devī*.[9]

*Power of Viṣṇu.*

Viṣṇu, the lord has three powers, the Supreme power of consciousness (*Cit Śakti*) and the inferior powers of *Avidyā*

1. Vāyū P. 9.82-84.
2. Ibid. 43.38.
3. Ibid. 101.208.
   Ibid. 30.65.
4. Ibid. 59.123.
5. Ibid. 77.81.
6. Ibid. 9.95-96.
7. Ibid. 9.89.
8. Ibid. 9.85-89. about 27 or 28 names.
9. Viṣṇu P. I.3.2.
   Ibid. VI.7.61.

and *Karma*.[1] *Śrīdharaswāmī* interprets thus—*Parā Śakti* is the power of pure conciousness, which constitutes his essence. *Avidyā* is the power which limits the pure consciousuess, and creates individual selves. *Karma Śakti* is *Māyā* which projects the multiform world appearance. The individual selves are limitations of the eternal universal self due to *Avidyā*. This inter pretation is in keeping with absolutism of *Advaita Vedānta*.[2] The Purāṇa speaks of *Viṣṇu* as the repository of all powers.[3] *Nārada Purāṇa* and the minor upaniṣads also speak of these three *Śaktis* of *Viṣṇu*.[4] *Śakti* is eulogised in the *Purāṇa* as the essence of all that exists. Mention is also made of her various names such as *Āryā*, *Durgā*, *Vedagarbhā*, *Ambikā*, *Bhadrakālī* etc. *Śakti* is thus depicted here as a personal deity endowed with those forms, of which we hear so much in the *Tantras*. *Śakti*-cult with all its contents seems to have been highly popular in the age of the *Purāṇas*. The Supreme charactor of *Viṣṇu-Śakti* is more conspicuously brought to light in the second part of the *Viṣṇupurana*. The all-pervading god (Viṣṇu) is said to have the all-illuminating power that crystallises in the shape of three *vedas*. The sun-god, it is stated, is a vivid symbol of this power and is therefore rightly called *trayīmaya*. *Viṣṇu-Śakti* eternally inheres in the sun and it is due to this inherence that the same god is rendered competent to shine so brilliantly and to remove the darkness of the world.[5]

*Agni-Purāṇa* as one of the important *Purāṇas* throw light on the prevalence of the cult of Śakti in India. *Śakti* is called here as *Parā-Śakti*, the ultimate power,[6] as well as the power pervaded in whole of the universe.[7] According to this Purāṇa

1. Viṣṇu P. VI.7 61.
   Sinha, J.N; A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 719.
   cf. Sharma, T.R.—Studies in the Sectarian upaniṣads—p. 21.
2. Sinha, J.N. The Foundation of Hinduism, p. 129.
3. Viṣṇu P. I.22.59.
4. Nārada P. I.47.37-38; I.49.29-34.
   cf. Sharma. T.R; Studies in the sectarian upaniṣads. p. 20-21.
5. Viṣṇu P. I.3.2.
6. Agni Purāṇa 98.5.
7. Ibid. 98.6.

the universe is a manifestation of power i.e. due to the union of *Śakti* and *Śivā*,[1] though two, but identified, as one.

The *Purāṇa*, being encyclopeadic in nature deals with the ritual side of the cult and therefore we find here chapters dealing with *Vratas* pertaining to *Devī*, (generally of the benign form), her names, and details of worship with particular objects. Thus *Sakāmā* Bhakti is the motto of this *Purāṇa*[2].

*Agni Purāṇa* is also very important from the point of Iconography of Devī. It is the only *Purāṇa* which deals separately in full detail, about Devī *Pratimās*.[3] Construction of the temples in general and Devī temples in special is also one of the subject of the present Purāṇa.

*Agni Purāṇa* mentions the following names of Śakti called as Devī :[4]

1. *Āryā*, *Durgā*, *Veda Garbhā*, *Ambikā*, *Bhadra Kalī*, *Bhadrā*, *Kṣemyā*, *Kṣemankari*, *Naika Bāhū*.[5]
2. *Umā*, *Menā*, *Śachī*, *Gaurī*, *Śivā* [6]
3. *Vāmā*, *Jyeṣṭhā*, *Raudrī*, *Kālī*,[7] *Lakṣmī*, *Saraswatī*, *Brahmāṇī*[8] etc.

*Umā Devī.*

*Brahma Purāṇa*, possibly the oldest among the *Purāṇas*, says that *Satī*, wife of *Śiva* and daughter of *Dakṣa*, burnt herself with her own fire in the sacrifices performed by *Dakṣa*, her father. She was again born from *Menā*, the wife of *Himavān* and was called *Umā*, by her mother.[9] She was married to *Śiva* after performing the required *Tapa*.

1. Agni P. 326.7.
2. Ibid. 97.27.
3. Ibid. Chs. 50, 52, 98, 133-135, 137.
4. Ibid. 37.9.
5. Ibid. 12.12-30; 268.15.
6. Ibid. 219.10-11.
7. Ibid. 21.10-11; 13; 24.
8. Ibid. 236.8, 11.
9. Brahma P. 34.41, 42. See Ch. 34 for Sati's death account. 34.80-86; 90 also for her marriage. chs. 35-36 also.

Here we can visualise the following three aspects of the goddess.

1. Daughter aspect—She is the daughter of *Himavān* and *Menā* and is being worshipped as *Kanyā*, *Pārvatī*, and *Girijā* etc.[1]

2. Bride aspect—She is married to *Śiva*. Throughout the Paurāṇic iiterature and Hindu culture, we see that She is worshipped as bride of Śiva, by the maidens, for the attainment of husband. She is called *Bhavānī*, *Gaurī*, *Rudrāṇī*, *Maheśvarī*, *Kālī*, *Śakti* and so on.[2]

3. Mother aspect—She is the mother of the world, gods, human beings and her sons *Gaṇeśa* and *Kārtikeya*.[3] She is supposed to be the creator of the world and the gods.[4]

This *Purāṇa* also describes her following manifestations :

1. *Pārvatī*—daughter of *Himavān*—wife of *Śiva*:[5]
2. *Mahākālī* or *Bhadrakālī*—formed out of the goddess due to anger to destroy the sacrifice performe by *Dakṣa*.[6]
3. *Kātyāyanī*—having lotus-like eyes, and pervaded in all, giver of all auspicious and happiness.[7] She is identified with *Prakṛti*.[8]

Mention is here made of three *Devī Tīrthas*—*Mātṛ Tīrthā*; *Umāvana*; and *Śākambharī*.[9]

*Concept of Śakti in the Matsya Purāṇa :*

*Pārvatī*

*Matsya Purāṇa* says that the mind-born daughter of the *Pitṛs* was married to *Himālaya*. She was *Menā*, who became the mother of the three daughters, named *Umā*, *Ekparṇā* and *Aparṇā*.[10] Pārvatī, daughter of the mountain, is the symbol of

1. Brahma P. 71.25, 26.
2. Ibid. 36.42; 71.23.
3. Ibid. 71.21-22; 65.37.
4. Ibid. 34.96.
5. Ibid. 34.90.
6. Ibid. 39.51; 68; 72.
7. Ibid. 57.58.
8. Ibid. 36.41; 30.78.
9. Ibid. 112.1, 23, 26; 108.28; 25.47.
10. Matsya P. Ch. 13 only.

the highest female energy manifested on the plane of matter or in the body.[1] She is the goddess married to *Śiva* and is combined in the half-male and half-female from of *Ardhanārīśvara*, who is the archetype of *Maithunī Śṛṣṭhi*; i.e. creation from the two parents. In the *Yoga* and *Tantra Sādhanā* the practical side of *Śiva-Sakti* is much elaborated. It should suffice to mention that the conception of *Śiva* and *Pārvatī* was raised to the highest level by the *Śaiva* philosophers. In fact the philosophy and the cult of *Śaivism* on the one side and of *Śakti* and *tantras* on the other are found developed in an exceptionally rich form in the *Purāṇas*.

*Pārvatī* is usually said to be the daughter of *Himālaya*, but here her trinitarian form is mentioned i.e. *Umā*, *Ekparṇa* and *Aparṇā* are, but three names of the single goddess so mentioned as to correspond with the triple form of *Śiva*, the *Tryambaka* God. The doctrine of the three mothers or of the three eyes of *Śiva* as *Tryambaka*,[2] was rooted In Vedic symbolism where the three mothers are named as *Ambā*, *Ambikā* and *Ambālikā*.

*Life story of Pārvatī* :

The *Ṛṣi* then raised a question about the life story of Pārvatī's previous birth when she, as daughter of *Dakṣa*, became angry at the insult shown by her father to Śiva, and gave up her life to take birth again as Pārvatī.[3] This story was well-known as a popular *Purāṇic* theme but here it is disposed off briefly. There are, however, several points to be noted :

1. *Dākṣāyaṇī* is spoken of by *Dakṣa* as the mother of the world (*Jagato Mātā*) who had become his daughter as an act of grace.[4]

2. The goddess is called *Sātī*, and *Dakṣa* says that there is nothing in the cosmos which is devoid of her presence.[5]

1. Agrawala, V S; Matsya Purāṇa—A study, p. 103.
2. Ṛgveda VII.59.12.
3. Matsya P. 13.1-25.
4. Ibid. 13.19.
5. Ibid. 13.12, 19.

*Satī*[1] pronounces a boon for the betterment of *Dakṣa*, and she is more explicit in saying that the 60 daughters of *Dakṣa* were varities of her own power.[2]

*The black Goddess.*

Once *Śiva* addressed to *Pārvatī* as *Kṛṣṇā* or *Kālī* 'the black goddess'.[3] The better reason for the goddess being addressed as *Kālī* is given in the *Devī Māhātmya*.[4] Once '*Pārvatī* came to take her bath in the *Gangā*, when a new goddess was born from the five sheaths of her body and was called *Kauśikī*, while *Pārvatī* remained herself as *Kālī*. It means that the two forms of the goddess are conceived here as her two aspects viz. white and black. The white aspect is *Kauśikī* and the dark one is *Kālikā*. We are reminded here of the two forms of *Rajas* viz. *Śukla* and *Kṛṣṇa* in the Ṛgveda.[5] Because of this opposite combination of the two aspects of the same Prāṇic energy, the goddess is known *Chitrā* or *Chitriṇī*,[6] the Variegated lady. She herself confesses that *Śiva's* address to her as *Kṛṣṇā* is both an insult as well as a compliment paid to her.[7]

The goddess performed *Tapa* and became successful in her mission i.e. to get her colour changed. She came back to her residence when *Brahmā* blessed her with a boon that she would become golden in colour and obtain the love of *Śiva* in the form of *Ardhanārīśvara*. *Brahmā* also added 'O Goddess of Night, you were previously *Ekānaṁsā*, and now go to the Vindhya mountain and fulfil there the desire of the gods and the lion will be your vehicle.[8] Thus addressed *Kauśikī* went to *Vindhyāchal* and *Umā* went to *Śiva*. Obviously it refers to the motif in the *Devī Māhātmya* about one of the forms of the goddess as *Vindhyavāsinī*, identified here with *Kauśikī*.[9]

1. Matsya P. 13.22.
2. Agrawala, (V.S.) Matsya Purāṇa—A Study, p. 104.
3. Matsya P. 154.8.
4. Devī Māhātmya 5.37-41.
5. Rv. VI.9.1.
6. Agrawala (V.S.), Matsya Purāṇa—A Study, p. 104.
7. Matsya P. 154.30.
8. Agrawala (V.S.), Matsya Purāṇa—A Study, p. 245.
9. Matsya p. 13.1-25.

*Concept of Śakti in the Kūrmapurāṇa.*

The purāna preaches the worship of *Śiva*, and regards him as indeterminate, attributeless, pure, eternal consciousness, which appears to be the multiform world and finite souls owing to *Māyā*. *Śiva* has *Śakti* or power of consciousness and bliss, which is non-different from him. In this *Purāṇa* there is a blend of pantheism, theism, and pure monism or absolutism.[1] Monism is very much emphasized, and knowledge of non-difference as well as absorption in *Brahman* is also stressed.

*Śiva* is possessed of *Māyā* (*Māyāvin*), his power or *Śakti*.[2] He creates the world with his power of *Māyā*, which is without origin and end. *Māyā* is eternal, multiform and is expressed in the multiform world.[3] *Śiva* has power of knowledge (*Jnāna Śakti*), power of creation (*Kriyā Śakti*); and power of sustenance (*Prāṇa Śakti*)[4], which are the forms of *Māyā*.[5] He is the lord of all powers. *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* are the forms of *Māyā*, which is one, infinite, all-pervading, partless and good[6].

*God and Śakti.*

*Śiva* is one and possessed of *Śakti*.[7] *Śiva* and *Śakti*, the possessor of power and the power itself, are said to be different in reality, but the *Yogin* realises non-difference between them.[8] Śakti is one, but it appears to be manifold owing to its limiting adjuncts.[9] There is no dualism of *Śiva* and Śakti as Śakti is non-different from Śiva and exists in him. It is the power of consciousness (*Cit Śakti*) in the heart of all beings. It is one infinite, intelligent, good and sovereign. It is without origin and end, the source of all powers and exis-

1. Sinha (J.N.), Foundation of Hinduism, p. 129.
2. Kūrma P. 12.19-20.
3. Ibid. 12.22-24.
4. Sharma-T.R. 'Studies in the Sectarian upaniṣads' p. 20-2.
5. Kūrma P. 12.21.
6. Ibid. 12.6-9.
7. Ibid. 1.12.
8. Ibid. 12; 12.28.
   Yoga Śikhā Up. 117.
   Pāśupata Brāhma Up. 4.
9. Kūrma P. 1.42.
   Ibid. 12.9.

tences. It is the source of *Mūla Prakṛti,* the root-evolvent. It is spotless and pure, and transcends *Māyā* (*Mayātīta*). It is logos (Nāda), cosmic nescience (Mahāmāyā), and the root-evol vent (*Mūla Prakṛti*). It is *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, and still beyond them. It is diversified into *Prakṛti*, composed of *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* It is neither created nor destroyed, but it creates, preserves and destroyes the things. It is the ground of the Universe, is and manifested in infinite forms. It is beyond the past, present and future. It exists in *Brahman* and springs from *Śiva* [1] It is both formless and formed, trancendent and immanent. It is always auspicious and expressed in the *Vedas.* It rules all i.e. *Prakṛti*, the *Puruṣa* and individual souls. It is the witness of *Śiva.* It is devoid of *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.*[2] *Śakti* is the power of consciousness and bliss, and the power which creates individual souls. Thus Kurma P. has extolled Śakti to its very height.

*Concept of Śakti in Śiva Purāṇa.*

*Śiva Purāṇa* has gone a step further in elucidating the position of *Śaktī* by making *Umā* a close and constant companion of *Śiva.*[3] We must remember that the eternal association of *Śiva* and *Śakti* is a matter of unique importance from the *Śākta* point of view.

In *Vāyu Saṁhitā*, a section of the *Purāṇa*, it appears that *Śakti* constitutes the first event of importance in the order of evolution proceeding from the Almighty *Śiva. Śakti* was the primal thing to come out of the great cause and she was subsequently followed by *Māyā, Avyakta* and so on.[4] *Śiva* is said to be the material cause as far as the creation of all objects beginning with *Māyā* is concerned. The point is made more clear by the statement that every thing, from *Śakti* to the world of matter, has its origin in the *Śiva Tattva.*[5] We can ill

1. Kūrma P. 1.12.
2. Ibid. 1.12; p. 102-104; 107-11, 114-15, 128.
3. Śiva Purāṇa 2.3.6.21; 1.19.15; 3.3.24; 5.19.37.
4. cf. Raghuvaṁsa 1.1. Śiva Purāṇa. 2.2.24.35.
5. Ibid. 5.19.36-37.
   Ibid. 6.16.54.

afford to forget that *Śakti* in its supreme phase is not at all distinguishable from *Śiva*, or, in other words, *Śiva tattva* itself is essentially the same *Śakti tattva*.[1] *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā* has taken the word *Śakti* as indicative of *Śiva Tattva* or *Parā Śakti*, which alone permeates the whole universe.[2] The *Purāṇa* has only touched upon the cardinal point of *Śaktivāda* when it echoes the oft-quoted *Śruti*[3] and states that the Lord's power is supreme and manifold, manifesting itself in the form of consciousness and joy and is shining as effulgantly as the rays of the sun.

In the *Śiva Purāṇa*, especially the sections called *Vāyu Saṁhitā* and *Umā Saṁhitā*, we come across many coherent materials as are necessary for having a uniform idea about the true perspective of *Śakti*.

1. First, it graphically reproduces the narrative of *Umā* and *Indra* as found in the *Kenopaniṣad* and makes no attempt to show how it brings to light the supremacy of *Śaktī*.

2. Then follows a somewhat lengthy dissertation relating to the real nature of *Śiva* and *Śakti*. While *Śakti* is styled as *Mahādevī*, or Supreme Goddess, the Lord *Śiva* is called *Śaktīmān* i.e. one who commands great power.[4] The whole world with all its wonders is said to magnify only an insignificant part of their divine glory.

Things, subtle or gross, conscious or inert, pure or foul, contain in their ultimate beginning the essence of these two *Tattvas* (*Śiva* and *Śakti*).[5] The universe might accordingly be called either *Śākta* or *Śaiva* in consequence of its emersion from a mystic combination of *Śiva* and *Śaktī*.[6]

This *Purāṇa* is emphatic upon the absolute non-difference between *Śiva* and *Śakti*. It is said : Just as the moon beams

1. Śiva Purāṇa. 3.6.316.
2. Under Vedanta Sūtra, 2.2.31.
3. Śvetaśwataropaniṣad, VI.8.
   Śiva P. 7.2.7.1; 7.2.7.16; 3.3.19; 7.2.31.22.
4. Ibid. 7.2.7.5; 7.2.4.1.
5. Ibid. (Vāyu Saṁhitā 4.4). Śiva P. 7.2.4.7.
6. Ibid. 7.2.4.36.

cannot be separated from the moon and the rays from the sun, so *Śakti* cannot be distinguishad from *Śiva*.[1] They are mutually dependent upon each other and perfectly, equal in nature.[2] *Śakti*, either as *Vidyā* or *Avidyā*, is held to be only naturally with *Śiva*, who possesses innumerable powers.[3] The whole trend of thought might be summed up in the following words—'there can be no *Śiva* without *Śakti* and no *Śakti* without *Śiva*.[4]

We feel tempted to mention few similies by which the relation between *Śiva* and *Śakti* has been established, "While all that is masculine, says the *Purāṇa*, comes from the Lord, all that is feminine evolves from the goddess, while former constitutes the subjective, the later represents the objective; while the one is said to be the beholder and the knower, the other stands for all that is observed and known. They are closely related together as day and night, time and space, the earth and the sky, the tree and the creeper and so on.[5]

The *Śiva Purāṇa* continues that *Śakti* is one and supreme, an embodiment of consciousness as well as the creative principle of the world.[6] She is called *Mūla Prakṛti* and *Māyā*, involving the three Gunas. At the time of utter annihilation, she ceases to be distinct entity and becomes absolutely identical with the Lord, only to appear again in an eventful hour.[7] Their oneness, however real and genuine, is said to be disturbed by the reactionary process of creation.

Reference has been made to the three kinds of divine powers, namely *Jnāna*, *Kriyā* and *Icchā*. The *Purāṇa* has *shown* how *Nāda* emerges from *Śakti* in consequence of a disruption brought about by *Kriyā Śakti* and *Bindu* arising from it, leading in turn the manifestation of *Sadā Śiva* or the Supreme Lord.[8]

1. Śiva Purāṇa 7.2.7.21; 7.2.4.10.
2. Ibid. 7.2.4.35.
3. Ibid. 7.2.7.1-8.
4. Ibid. 7.2.4.12-15.
5. Ibid. 7.2.4.37-70.
6. Ibid. 7.2.4.15.
7. Ibid. 7.2.4.18.
8. Ibid. I.16.87; 7.2.4.19-20.
   Śāradā Tilaka I.7.

It is said that one and the same *Śakti* assumes different forms and appears manifold to our vision.[1] The *Purāṇa* explicitly states that all divinities are the various personifications of *Śakti*. It holds that *Rudrāṇī*, *Vaiṣṇavī*, *Brāhmī*, *Aindrī* etc., are all embodiments of *Śakti*. The *Purāṇa* comes to the main point of interest by stating freely that the whole world is permeated by *Śakti*, i.e. whatever we perceive being only a positive manifestation of nothing but Śakti.[2]

The *Umā Saṁhitā*, a section of *Śiva Purāṇa*, gives us almost the same narrative of *Śakti* and her wonderful activities as we find in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* and other *Purāṇas*. The utterance of the goddess appearing in the person of *Umā* is fraught with much significance and helps one to have a clear vision about the supreme character of *Śakti*. *Umā* is introduced in all her glory as addressing the gods in the following words.

"I am the Supreme *Brāhman*, the great light and the sacred syllable (*Praṇava*). I am all : nothing exists that does not partake of me. Though essentially formless, I assume forms and represent all that exists. Unthinkable are my qualities; I am eternal and appear in the dual forms of cause and effect. The so-called *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa* are nothing but two aspects, in which I manifest myself. I am both male and female. The deities like *Kālikā*, *Kamalā*, *Vāṇī* etc. are all embodiments of my *Śakti* and have evolved out of my person."[3]

*Śiva* and his *Śakti* always go together. Just as we cannot distinguish the moon from the moonlight, similarly *Śiva* and *Śakti* cannot be distinguished. They are inseperable.[4] It ts out of *Śakti* that the whole world comes into being. This *Śakti* is of the form of conciousness and divides herself in many ways.

With regard to the evolution of the world, the *Śiva Purāṇa* says tha *Nāda* arises by the disturbance of the equilibrium of *Prakṛti* and from that arises *Bindu*, from that *Sadāśiva*; i.e. *Maheśwara*; and from him comes Pure knowledge.[5] From

1. Śiva P. 7.2.4-17.
2. Ibid. 7.2.4.28-30.
3. Ibid. 7.2.4.20-22.
4. Ibid. 7.2.4.9-11.
5. Ibid. 7.2.4.15-30.

the manifestation of *Māyā* arose *Kalā*, Niyati, *Vidyā*, *Rāga*, *Puruṣa* and also three *Guṇas*. Further evolution is on *Sānkhya* lines.

*Concept of Śakti in the Sūta Samhita.*

In the *Sūta-Samhitā Umā* is said as *Śakti* of *Śiva*. She is the Mother of the world and possessed of three Guṇas—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* and she is praised in all the three *Vedas*.[1] She is full of compassion and gives both, the worldly enjoyments as well as final salvation.[2] She is old, rather primaeval force in the world, comprising all knowledge, wordly and *Pārmārthika*, both in herself.[3]

Sometimes this *Śakti* of *Śiva* is called as *Māyā*, performing all the difficult tasks in the world and the universe is governed by her.[4] She is not different from *Śiva* and both are full of *Ānanda*. She even gives enjoyments and auspicious to *Śiva*. She is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent—as well as full of kind heart to remove the fetters of the devotees and to give her own form to them.[5]

*Śakti* takes the *Virāṭ Rūpa*, i.e. universe is comprised in her. She is the cause of the world's creation, omniscience (*Sarvajñā*); and observor of the world's activities. She is incarnated as *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*. She is *Sadāśiva*, or Lord or *Hiraṇya Garbha*. The *Lokapālas* like *Indra* are full of her power. She is inherent in the gods, human beings, animate and inanimate beings, herbs, edibles, mountains and rivers, ocean and electricity, i.e. the whole universe. Thus she is having variety of forms and shades.[6]

She is the cause of the creation as well as of the dissolution of the world. She gives prosperity and salvation. She puts the beings in the world moving and frees them. In herself everything is inheritant. Without her power Śiva

1. Sūta Saṁhitā, III.1.13—(Sūta Saṁhitā is a part of Skanda Purāṇa).
2. Ibid. Yajna Vaik, Pūrva Bhāga 36.46.
Ibid. 36.2.
. Ibid. 8.29-31.
Ibid. Y. V Uttara Bhāga 4.103-113,
Ibid. Y. V. Pūrva 13.1-44.

becomes motionless, rather impotent, and with her he is all powerful.[1]

The *Yajña Vaibhava Khaṇḍa* of the *Sūta Samhitā* begins with the philosophical disquisition of the *Āshraya* of *Śakti* on the Supreme Being with the attributes of *Ekā*, *Paramā Śakti*, *Māyā Durghaṭakārinī* and *Ānandarūpa* of *Śiva*.[2] She is further designated as *Mātṛkā* and *Mantramātā*,[3] and this *Mātṛkā* is of three forms, *Sthūla*, *Sūkṣma* and *Susūkṣma*.[4] The inseparability of *Śakti* from the *Jīva*, whetever you may call it—*Śiva*, *Rudra*, *Viṣṇu*, *Brahman*, *Virāṭ*, *Hiraṇyagarbha*, *Swarāṭ*, *Samrāṭ*, *Indra* or any *lokapāla*, *deva* or human being, bird or beast, plants, rivers or mountain etc. is prominent here. It is concluded that he, who sees the identity of *Umā-Śankara* (*Śiva-Śakti*) alone sees, and He is the person. who has realised the truth to whatever sect he belongs, viz. *Śaiva*, *Bhāgavata*, *Jaina* and *Buddha*.[5]

Some light is also thrown on the nature and locus of some of the *Śaktis*. The *Sūtagīta* portion of the Sūta *Samhitā* explains what *citśakti*, *Māyāśakti*, *parā śakti* and *Bindumayī Śakti* are, and what place they occupy in the individual soul, called *Brahman*. *Cit Śakti* is to be located in the middle part of the body called *Mūlādhāra*, *Māyā Śakti* is stationed at the frontal end of the face and *Parā Śakti* is in the form of *Nāda* and takes a place in the middle portion of the face; while *Śakti* in the form of binder has the intervening part of the brows for its station. The places assigned for the *Śaktis* of *Trimūrtis* are as follows; *Sarasvati* on the tip of the tongue, *Mahālakshmī* in the heart-centre and *Pārvatī* with *Rudra*.[6] The fundamental idea underlying this concept is that every part of the individual soul is made to act and to desire with the help of a certain *Śakti* which is personified energy. One point is to be noted that the Sūta Saṁhitā is well-acquainted with the *Tāntric* works

1. Sūta Samhitā Y.V. Pūrva 13.3-5.
2. Ibid. II, 6-7, 41; VII.3; and chapter XIII whole.
3. Ibid. IV.10-11.
4. Ibid. IV.31-32.
5. Ibid. XIII.2-39.
6. Ibid, VII.17-23.

like the *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava Āgamas* as well as those of Avaidic sects like the Jain and Buddhist.

*Śakti is pervaded in the world* :

*Skanda Purāṇa*, with great confidence propounds that the whole world is pervaded by her—the Supreme. You may call it *Śakti*, *Prakṛti*, or *Brahman*, which becomes manifested at the time of emergency. She creates supports, preserves as well as looks for the welfare of this world, by remaining herself un-manifest and that is why though present in everything but it is not visible—like fire in the wood, oil in the seasum, butter in the milk.[1]

2. She being *Jñānamayī*, stands in every heart,[2] and is called *Ceta Svarūpinī* or *Cit Śakti*. She creates the delusion and also dispels it.

3. She being existence (*Sat*), every bit of the world called *Astīti* i.e. which exists, is a form of Devī.[3]

4. She is five gross-elements, out of which every being is made of, therefore she is stated to be residing in everyone.[4]

5. She is power inherent in every body—animate or inanimate, gods and mortals, even of *Brahman*, without her no existence and movement.[5]

*Prakṛti* :

According to *Skanda Purāṇa*, *Parā Śakti* like *Brahman*, is fromless and *Nirguṇa*, devoid of *Guṇas*. She assumed these

1. Skanda P. 6.162.19-20.
   Ibid. I.2.65.15.
   Ibid. 6.155.60.
2. Skanda P. 3.1.18.45.
   Ibid. IV.5.72.
   Ibid. 3.2.19.19.
3. Ibid. 7. Arbuda Kh. 22.24.
4. Skanda P. IV.2.72.43.
   Ibid. IV.168.51.
   Ibid. I.3.21.26.
5. Ibid. 7.1.16.7,19.
   Ibid. IV.2.72.49, 51.

*Guṇas* and created the world out of these.[1] This world which is created by her, is also destroyed, filling it with *Tamas*, darkness or ignorance, by the goddess. She is also *Prakṛti* composed of three *Guṇas*.[2] It is said that she is part and partial of Siva's body and if she is called *Pradhānā* or *Prakṛtī*, *Māyā Guṇavatī*, promulgater of intelloct or *Śakti*—then the Lord is full of bliss and enjoyment.[3]

She is *Mūlaprakṛti* enveloping whole of the world with its own *Māyā*, overpowered by whom, the gods are not able to understand or follow her forms and actions. According to the pre-dominance of one of the three qualities *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, she incarnated in three forms viz. *Gaurī*, *Lakṣmī* and *Saraswatī*.[4] By nature she is very kind like mother. In this aspect she is related with Viṣṇu, who cannot remain even for a moment derived of her. She, the embodiment of All-power, is also all-auspecious.[5]

*Śiva Śakti-union* :

According to this *Purāṇa*, *Śakti* is not different from *Śiva* or *Śaktimān*, they are one and the same. *Śiva* himself is *Śakti* due to his own will.[6] To illustrate this the author has given the chapters, in which, it is shown that whole of this world, is pervaded by *Śiva* and *Devī* or *Śakti* and *Śaktimān*. Without one, other is not there, they are undivided one.[7]

*Skanda Purāṇa* says that not a bit of the world is devoid of *Śakti* and *Śiva*, they are well-placed, possessed of power. They are present in every being. *Śiva* says himself that he sports with *Pārvatī* for sports sake.[8] *Sūta Saṁhitā* also confirms the idea.[9]

I. Skanda P. I.26.7-8.
 Ibid. I.21.67.
2. Ibid. I.3.1.1.27.
3. Ibid. IV.1.26.22-27.
4. Ibid. II. Kārtika Māhātmya 22.19-25.
5. Ibid. 2.2.30.55-61.
6. Linga P. 1.75.34-36.
7. Ibid. II.11.1-34.
 Skanda P. 7.1.16.7-8.
8. Ibid. 7.3.54-83.
9. Sūta Samhitā. Y.V. 13.1-41.

1. *Śiva* is Lord—the goddess is *Śivā*, companian.[1]
2. *Śiva* is *Īśwara*, she is *Māyā*, inseparable from him.[2]
3. *Śiva* is *Puruṣa* of *Sāṁkhya*—she is *Prakṛti*, the inspirer of the creator.[3]
4. *Śiva* is meaning—She is speech, not distinguishable.[4]
5. One is night and other is day.[5]
6. One is sky and other is earth.[6]
7. One is *Brahmā* and other is *Sāvitrī*, his power.[7]
8. One is identified with *Viṣṇu* and other is *Lakṣmī*.[8]
9. One is Manu and other is his wife *Śatarūpa*.[9]
10. One is the Masculine and the other is feminine.[10]
11. One is Material, and an other is quality.[11]
12. *Śiva* is *Ātman* (*Śarīrī*) while she is body (*Śarīram*).[12]
13. *Śiva* is creator and she is creation.[13]
14. *Śiva* is knower and she is knowledge.[14]
15. *Śiva* is of *Linga* from while she is of *Pītha* form (*Yoni*).[15]

*Liṅga Purāṇa* says that the goddess is *Sarva-loka-Maheś-warī*.[16] Here she is presented as the consort of *Śiva*, all the times by his side. Rather one should say that she is the power of Śiva, never distinct from him.[17] In this *Purāṇa* we get the detailed description of *Ardhanārīśwara* form of *Śiva*. *Śiva* by his will, created her and she created *Laskmī*,

1. Linga P. II.11.1-34.
2. Ibid. II.11.3.
3. Ibid. II-11.4.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. II.11.5.
7-8. Ibid. II.11.7-12.
9. Ibid. II.11.13.
10. Ibid. II. 11. 18-20.
11. Ibid. II. 11.20-21.
12. Ibid. II.11.24.
13. Ibid. II.11.26.
14. Ibid. II.11.27-34.
15. Ibid. II.11.31.32.
16. Ibid P. I.100.5.
17. Ibid. I.87.13. I.75.34-36.

*Durgā, Śivā, Vaiṣṇavī.*[1] It is said that her manifestation are of two types—benign (white or *Saumya*) and fearful (black or *Raudra*).[2] It mentions various goddesses belonging to *Śiva* group and several Mothers also. About the origin of *Devī*, it is said that *Śiva* escated her and she was called *Satī*, then born in the Himālayas[3]. Here she is more in the fold of Śiva's family, than an independent cult-deity

*Durgā as power of Viṣṇu.*

In the *Nārada Purāṇa*, *Durgā* or *Śakti*, is related with *Viṣṇu*, the power of *Viṣṇu*, who controls the world.[4] When she is realised without *Viṣṇu*, she is *Māyā* and the universe exists, and if identified with *Viṣṇu*, she is the Almighty power, pervading whole of the universe.[5] Philosophically she is named as *Vidyā*, knowledge pertaining to the *Para Brahman* and *Avidyā*, worldly knowledge.[6] From the devotional point of view she is named variously—i.e. *Umā, Śākti, Lakṣmī, Bhāratī, Girijā, Ambikā, Durgā, Bhadra-Kālī, Chaṇḍī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Māyā, Prakṛti* and *Parā.*[7] In this way the author of the *Purāṇa* tries to synthesise all the possible different points of view about *Śakti-cult*, and he is trying more & more to have a harmony between *Śaiva Śakti-cult* and *Vaiṣṇava Śakti-cult.*

In the *Varāha Purāṇa*, *Devī* is said to be having fearful form, (*Bhīma Darśanā*).[8] She is manifested in the world and Pervaded everywhere (*Viśvatomukhī*).[9] Like *Devī Bhāgavata* she is said to be *Śānkarī* and *Brāhmī* both, i.e. different manifestations of the one.[10] She is full of compassion for the human folk, and is the progenitor of all the lores, the *Purāṇas* and the arts and crafts[11].

1. Ling p. I.70.325-328. I.41.43-47.
2. Ibid. I.70.329-338.
3. Ibid. I.101-107.
4. Nārada Purāṇa 1.3.6.
5. Ibid. I.3.7-10.
6. Ibid. I.3.6-8.
7. Ibid. 1.3.13-15.
8. Varāha P. 95.58;28.32-33.
9. Ibid. 96-48-49; 95.58.
10. Ibid. 95.61.
11. Ibid. 95.63; 170.39.

She having 20 arms or eight arms, equipped with weapons, riding on lion, went to kill to demon *Mahiṣa*, and ultimately killed him.[1] Her epithets are *Mahāmāyā*, *Mahāprabhā*, *Mahāsatvā*, *Mahotṣavā*, *Mahāvidyā*, *Mahāvedyā* and *Maheśwarī*.[2] The *Purāṇa* divides her manifestations into three groups. *Raudrī* or *Kālī*, i.e. the *Tāmasī Śakti* has been identified with *Chaṇḍikā* or *Chāmuṇḍā* and all other folk deities.[3] She is to be worshipped on *Navamī* day. Here she is depicted, all the time residing on the *Himālayas*.[4]

*Padma Purāṇa* also justifies the threefold division of *Śakti*. As *Prakṛti*, she is said to be constituted by three *Guṇas*, viz. *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. Thus being identified with *Prakrti*, *Śakti* is also of three types—*Sātvikī—Brāhmi Śakti*, *Rajasī*, *Vaiṣṇavī Śakti*, and *Tāmasī—Raudrī Śakti*.[5] All the goddesses are classified under these three headings, called as the manifestations of either *Raudrī* or *Vaiṣṇavī* or *Brāhmī Śakti* respectively.[6] It also mentions the *Vratas* in honour of *Devī Gauri*, *Mangalā* and so on. Here it seems that the accounts given in this *Purāṇa* tally with those of the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*. Both the *Purāṇas* are one while saying that the *Śakti* or *Devī* is better half of *Śiva*.[7]

*Vāmana Purāṇa*.

Devī is represented here as a virgin goddess, having three eyes, eighteen hands and possessing a very mind—attracting personality and holding weapons in her hands.[8] In the form of *Kātyāyanī*, she is depicted as playing on *Viṇā* in the battlefield.[9]

*Śakti* is identified here with *Brahman*, pervading whole of the universe. She is virtually the store-house of all powers.[10]

1. Varāha P. 95.46-56; 28.25-27.
2. Ibid. 28.30-36.
3. Ibid. 96.65;72; 18-19; 32-33; 48-54; 95.62.
4. Ibid. 28.41; 47; 17.68.
5. Padma P. 1.35.177-179.
6. Ibid. I.35.187-189.
7. Ibid. I.29.10-29; Bhaviṣya P. Uttara parva. 25.1-44.
8. Vāmana P. 19.3.16.
9. Ibid. 20.33; 18.18-20.
10. Ibid. 32.19-20, 36.19.

The episodes of *Devī Māhātmya*, viz:—*Mahiṣāsura-vadha*, *Chaṇḍa-muṇḍa-vadha*, *Śumbha-Niśumbha-vadha*[1] etc. in *Vāmana Purāṇa* appear to be prior to those of *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*.[2]

She is the mother of the world and the consort of *Śiva*. As Satī, she is said to be residing on the back of the clouds.[3] As *Kātyāyanī* she is sitting on the dead body of the demon *Mahiṣa*, as represented in Indian art later on, and is called *Mahiṣāsuramardinī*.

*The Bhāgavata Purāṇa.*

Though the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is a gospel of the *Vaiṣṇavas*, it contains plenty of evidence concerning the worship of *Śakti*.[4] Describing the worship of *Śakti*, it is said that a chieftain of the *Śudras*, desirous of an issue, proceeded to offer a human victim to goddess *Bhadrakāli*.[5] The *Purāṇa* also mentiones a person named *Jaḍa Bharata*, being offered to the goddess *Kālī*.

*Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa* himself addresses *Yogamāyā* 'people will worship you by means of incense, offerings of food and other presents. They will recognise you as the supreme controller of men and as the bestower of desired blessings. Men will construct temples on earth and give appellations to you such as *Durgā*, *Bhadrakālī*, *Vijayā*, *Vaiṣṇavī*, *Kumudā*, *Chaṇḍikā*, *Kṛṣṇā*, *Mādhavī*, *Kanyakā*, *Māyā*, *Nārāyaṇī*, *Īśānā*, *Śāradā Ambikā* and so on.'[6]

In this *Purāṇa*, *Śakti* is described as having a form[7] with eight mighty arms equipped with weapons. She is adorned with ethereal wraths, sandal-paste, and bejewelled ornaments. She wielded a bow, a pike, an arrow, a shield, a sword, a conch and a mace. This account agrees with the images of *Śakti* ordinarily in vogue. Again in the tenth book, the maidens of *Vraja*

1. Kapadia (B.H), 'Some Aspects of Vāmaṇa Puraṇa', Please see Chs. 52·56 also Puraṇa—Jan. 1965, P-181 only.
2. Ibid. 'Purāṇa', Jan. 1965.
3. Vāmana P. 2.5.
4. Bhāgavata P. IV.24.62; V.9.15-16. VIII.6.9; XI.3.47; XI.27.49;
5. Ibid. V.9.12; V.26.31.
6. Ibid. X.2.11-12.
7. Ibid. X.4.9-12.

are depicted as worshipping goddess *Kātyāyanī*, by offering sandal paste, fragrant flowers and lights etc.[1]

On the day before Krishna's marriage, a great procession of the *Ambikā* is started in which the bride goes to the temple of the goddess[2] to worship her. Even the habitants of Dwārkā along with Devaki, Vasudeva and Rukminī worshipped *Durgā* for the safe return of *Kṛṣṇa* [3] The *Bhāgavata* has referred to the eternal association between *Śiva* and *Śakti*.[4] Here god is said to perform the threefold function of creation, sustenance and destruction, with the help of his own power.[5]

*Prakṛti as Śakti in the Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* :

The *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* mentions manifestations of *Sakti* such as *Saraswatī*, *Durgā*, *Lakṣmī* and so on. The most important cult of this *Purāṇa* is that of *Rādhā*.[6] Few hymns are also devoted to the praise of *Devī Kālī* and *Bhadra Kālī*, both representing the fierce aspect of *Śakti*.[7]

In this *Purāṇa Śakti* is called great mother and *mūlaprakṛti* out of which evolves the whole universe; it is held to be the real essence and ultimate substratum of all that exists.[8] This original *Prakṛti* first assumed five forms[9] i.e. *Durgā*, *śakti* of *Śiva*, *Lakṣmī*, *Śakti* of *Viṣṇu*, *Saraswatī*, *Sāvitrī* and *Rādhā*, the favourite of the youthful *Kṛṣṇa*.

Besides these manifestations of the *Śakti* or *Prakṛti*, the whole body of goddesses are said to have sprung from the same source. In every creation of the universe, it is said that the Mūla Prakṛti assumes the different gradations of *Anśarūpiṇī*, *Kalārūpiṇī*, and *Kalānśarūpiṇī*, or manifests herself in parts and further sub-divisions.[10]

1. Bhāgavata. P. X.22. 1-3.
2. Ibid. X.52.42.
3. Ibid. X.56.35; X.34.1-2.
4. Ibid. X.83.3.
5. Ibid. IV.11.26.
6. Brama Vaivarta P. Brahma Khaṇḍa Chs. 5.48-55, Prakrti Khaṇḍa Chs. 48-56.
7. Ibid. Prakṛti Khaṇḍa ch. 36-37.
8. Ibid. Prakṛti Khaṇḍa 2.66; 7.10.
9. Ibid. 1.59-155.
10. Ibid. 1.54-56.

The chief ansas are *Gangā*, *Manasā*, *Śaṣṭhi*, *Mangalā*, *Chaṇḍikā* and *Kālī*.[1] The principal *Kalās* are *Swāhā*, *Swadhā* ete.; and all these are secondary goddesses.

Besides this derivation of *Prakṛti*, or *Śakti* from the Supreme, and the secondary origin of all other goddesses from her, she is contemplated as comprising all essence in her. She is not only declared to be one with the male deity, but also said residing in all things, rather besides her there is nothing.[2]

*Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* is considered the latest *Parāṇa* and deals mostly with *Vratas* to *Devī*. Various goddesses have been praised and worshipped. *Śakti* is called the mother of the world—and the creator of all the *Lokas*, gods, sages and human beings.[3] She is also depicted *Vaiṣṇavī*, removing fears of all and giving auspicious knowledge to all. This Pūraṇa discribes mostly the auspicious forms of Devī, viz. *Lalitā*, *Bhavānī*, *Gaurī*, *Umā*, *Satī*, *Mangalā* and *Kamalā*.[4] Here goddess is described as having very beautiful form, possessed of four hands, sitting in meditation; wearing the skin of the deer, having matted hair, adorned with ornaments; thus she may be called *Mahālakṣmī*.[5] She is said to be one with *Śiva*.[6] Accounts of battles against demons are also given here in detail. The close study of the *Purāṇa* shows that the cult of *Śakti* was in prevalence and generally the womanfolk accepted her as its deity.[7]

*Nature of Śakti in the Purāṇas.*

By the study of the evolution of the concept of *Śakti* in the Paurāṇic literature as well as Śākta philosophy, three trends or traditions of her evolution are brought to light viz.—

1. Her association with *Śiva*, where she seems to side the main stream of the *Śaiva* cult. Here she is *Śiva's* spouse.[8]

1. Brama Vaivarta P. II.1.1-155.
2. Ibid. II.2.6-12; 73-76,
3. Bhaviṣya P. Pratisarga Parva 3-12.17-19.
4. Ibid. 3.12.109; 3.25.4-6
5. Bhaviṣya P, Uttara Parva 25.31-32; 10;41.1-18; 26.31.
6. Ibid. 18.15-18; 3. Brahmottara Khaṇḍa 13.44-51.
7, Ibid, 24.35; 23.12-13.
8. Śiva P. 2.3.4.18; Brahma P. 34.42; 36.42.

2. She is a counter-part of *Śiva*, equally prominent, thus both, *Śiva* and *Śakti*, are representing two aspects of the one non-dual truth.[1]

3. The goddess is virtually a substitute for the Upaniṣadic *Brahman*, conceived in feminine terms and images.[2] She is one and the Absolute, excluding all possibilities of there being a second. This tradition of the independent nature of the goddess features prominently in whole of the Purāṇic lore.

Now we will see that how far the authors of the *Purāṇas* have been successful in establishing the supremacy of *Śakti* identified as *Brahman*. *Śakti* here is also identified with *Māyā* i.e. the cosmic world and then unity of *Śakti* with *Śaktimān*, meaning one only, is very much emphasized here.

*Supremacy of Śakti.*

By the authors of the *Purāṇas*, *Śakti* is considered as *Brahman*.[3] Now that is why in all the works, the Supremacy of *Śakti* or goddess is established. She is *Māyā* and controls the whole universe, created by Her alone. All the duties namely preservation, creation and destruction of the world are performed by Her through the agencies of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśa*, which are the proper names as well as the different energies of that *Parāśakti*.[4] She is having immesurable power and directs the creatures of the world[5] according to Her desire, as she is also conceived as *Icchā Śakti*, power of imagination. She is Sovereign ruler of the universe and through her mercy, she, resting incarnate in each *Jīva* (in the form of Ātman)[6]—is directing each and every *Jīva* towards the Eternal

1. Śiva P. 7.2.4.1-15; 7.2.7. 1-2; 21; Kūrma P. I.12; Bhāgavata P. X 83.3.
2. Sapta Śati X.5; Devī Bhāgavata P. I.4.60-61; I.8·47-48; Śiva P. 2.1.6. 15-17; Skanda P. I.20.7.
3. Dbh. IV.25.68; Kūrma P. I.22. Vāmana P. 56.25; Śiva P. 2.2.24.35; 2.2.12.13; Brama V.P. I.30.11;17.
4. Dbh. IV.19.32; Śiva P. Māhātmya 5.4-5; 2.0.13.3; Kūrma P. 12.225.
5. Ibid. IV.26.51. Śiva P. 3.3.19.
6. Ibid. IV·25.78; Śiva P. 5.29.16-17.
   Sūta Samhitā Pūrva Bhāga. 47.60.

Freedom from the world.[1]

She is Just universal Mother making no distinction between her good and bad sons,[3] the *devas* and *dānavas*—the gentle fellow and the wicked persons.[4] She is the highest *Prakṛti*, shining differently according to the differences in time and circumstances. This threefold *Prakṛti* viz. of *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*—the great enchantress of the world creates, preserves and destroys the world at the end of the *Kalpa*.[5]

She is called *Sanātanī Yogamāyā* or prime *Śakti* or power of Lord.[6] No body in the world is independent to act according to his own desire, as it is She only, who controls the minds of the people and the world,[7] *Indra* describes her as the Supreme Heroine and everything that relates to force, described in the *Sakti Darśana Śāstras*. She is having the ten *Tattvas*, the Mother, the *Mahā Vidyā*, Goddess of the universe, the *Mahākuṇḍalinī*, the everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss.[8]

She is the Deity of the Vital Fire (*Prāṇa*), the holy flame burning always in the ethirial space in the heart.[9] She is the indweller of the *Ānand-maya-Kośa*, the nature of *Brahman*, the deity of all, the bliss unblown, the deity cf the *Upaniṣads*[10] She is said to be endowed with all the powers ever manifested whenever protection is demanded·[11] She is the sole refuge in

1. Dbh. IV.25.13; 68-73;
   Śiva P. 5.28.17.
2. Ibid. IV.25.68; Sūta Samhita-pūrva Bhāga 47.41.
3. Ibid. IV.15.37. Brahma V.P. II.1.27; Kūrma P. I.1.38;
   Śiva p. 5.50.42-44.
4. Ibid. IV.16.42; 36.
5. Dbh. IV.16.23-26; Brahma Vaivarta P. I.30.11-12; II.1.3-10;
   Śiva P. 2.1.6.15-17; 2.3.13.3.
6. Ibid. IV.19.7-8; Brahma Vaivarta P. I.30.12.
7. Ibid. IV.18.33-36; Brahma Vaivarta P. II.1.43-46;
   Śiva P. 7.2.7.19.
8. Ibid. IV.15.11-12; Brahma Vaivarta P. II.1.43-46;
   Sūta Samhitā Pūrva Bhāga 47.42-59; 67-68.
9. Ibid. IV.15.13.
10. Ibid. IV.15.14.
    Kūrma P. I 2.28.
11. Ibid. IV.15.15-16.

this universe, in times of distress, and the only one, strong and capable to remove all our dangers,[1] She always comes forward and relieves the distressed. She is the time incarnate of all these worlds.[2] Author says that she is sung in all the *Purāṇas* as the world Mother.[3] She is the sole Ruler of this universe, having the personal desire (*Swārtha*) in her mind. The *Śāstras* differ in saying the nature of religion—and the means of salvation but they all agree on the point of supremacy of *Parā Śakti*, to be meditated for the final *Moka.*[4]

*Parā Śakti as Brahman.*

*Devī Bhāgavata* and the worshippers of *Śakti* hold a view that *Parāśakti* is a synonym of *Brahman*,[5] the ultimate reality in ihe world. She may be called *Brahman* or *Mahāśakti* or *Prakṛti*, Mother of the universe, i.e. progenitor, complete, omnipresent, *Nirguṇa* or *Saguṇa*.[6] She is the great goddess of the *Brahmāṇḍa*, she is without beginning and end, the one and secondless. It is this *Śakti* that assumes the verious endless forms such as *Vaiṣṇavī*, *Śāṅkarī* etc.[7] It is this *Vidyā* nature that is one and the only root of this tree of *Sansāra*.[8]

She is beyond the three *Guṇas* and still she emanates, them. She is the nature of *Vidyā* and devoid of attributes.[9] The knowers of *Vedānta* meditate on her as formless, immuta-

1. Dbh. IV.15.17; Śiva P. 2.3.4.11.
2. Ibid. IV.15.17a.
3. Ibid. IV. 15.38.
4. Ibid. IV.15.16; Kūrma P. I.6.164-16 6; 12.30; 286; Śiva P. 7.1.26.13-20; 5.50.37-38.
5. Ibid. I.8.34. Vāmana P. 32.19-20; Kūrma P. 12.32-36; 235.
6. Dbh. III.1.31-33. Kūrma P. 12. 26; 44. Śiva P. 7.1.15.5-7.
7. Ibid. III.1.35. Liṅg a P.110.5.0. Kūrma P. 12.230.
8. Ibid. III.1.35. Sapta Śatī I.57-58.
9. Ibid. III.1.36-37. Kūrma P. 12.207-212. Sūta Samhitā, Pūrva Bhāga, 47.33-34.

ble, stainless, omnipresent *Brahman*, devoid of all *Dharma*.[1] She is described as full of light (*Tejomayam*).[2] She gives *Mokṣa* to those who are desirous of libration and worldly rewards to those who want such.

The great *Śakti* is the highest deity to be worshipped with meditation. All the powers, bravery, prosperity and glory seen in the world, all are derived from the mere parts of the *Parā-Śaktt*.[3] She is the lady of the Universe—(*Bhuvaneśwarī*) in her ruling aspect. She is even ruling over the five principal deities viz.—*Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, *Īśwara* and *Sadāśiva*.[4] In her all this universe is interwoven. She is having *Virāṭaroopa*, (world as her form) *Sūkṣma Rūpa*, (subtle from) and then Her *Antaryāmī Rūpa* (inner form ruling within).[5] She is again called of the nature of Existence, intelligence and bliss.[6] She is existing separately in every gross body, also existing wholly (cosmically) in all the gross bodies. In subtle bodies also she exists both individually and universally. She is existing in causual bodies separately, wherein all the *Liṅga Dehas* (subtle bodies) are interwoven, and universally as well.[7] She is the receptacle of all the *Jīvas* and resides in all the bodies, she is also the nature of the *Ātman*, the goal of all beings.[8]

*Śakti, Brahman and Māyā : oneness of these three.*

*Devī Bhāgavata* says in the words of Umā *Haimavatī*, 'This my form is *Brahman*, the cause of all causes, the seat of *Māyā*, the witness of all, infallible and free from all defects or blendishes. What all the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* try to establish,

1. Sūta Samhitā. III.1.37-38.
   Kūrma P. 12.233; 226-230.
2. Ibid. III.1.38b.
3. Dbh. VII.29.3.
   Compare Gītā Sloka X.41.
   Kūrma P. 12.215-225.
4. Ibid. VIII.29.7.
   Śiva P. 5.4-6.
5. Ibid. VII.29.15.
6. Ibid. VII.29.16.
7. Dbh. VII.30.4-7.
   Siva P. 7.1.29.3-37.
8. Liṅga P. I.82.23-24.II.12.32.

what is to be realised and ought to be obtained, I am all that.[1] I am of the nature of the great light. *Brahman* is revealed by *Om* and *Hrīm*, the two *Bīja-Mantras*, these are my two first and foremost *Mantras*.[2] For the sake of convenience, when creating this universe, I have two aspects; therefore my *Bīja Mantras* are two. '*Om*' is denominated as *Saccidānanda* (everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss) and *Hrīm* is *Māyā Prakṛti*, the undifferentiated consciousness, made manifest.[3] *Māyā* as the highest *Śakti* is not different from me, the omnipotent. As moon light is not different from the moon, so this *Māyā Śakti* in the state of equilibrium is not different from me. The powerful and the power are not different, they are verily one and the same.[4] During *Pralaya*, this *Māyā* lies latent in Me, without there being any difference. Again at the time of creation this *Māyā* appears as the fructification of the *Karma* of the *Jīvās*. When *Māyā* is potential and exists latent in *Brahman* or *Śakti*, when she is *Antarmukhī*, it is called unmanifested; and when the *Māyā* becomes kinetic, *Bahirmukhī*, and she is in active kinetic state, it is said to be manifested.'[5]

There is no origin or beginning of this *Māyā*. It is the nature of *Brahman* in a state of equilibrium. But during the beginning of creation, Her form consisting of the several *Guṇas* appears, and this is called Her *bahirmukhī* state denominated by *Tamas* and the other *Guṇas*. From this (Her state of abstraction, and becoming introspective, in her *Antarmukhī* state known as *Māya*.) comes *Sattva* and then *Rajas* and then Tamas

1. Dbh. XII.8.62-63.
   Kūrma P. 12.32-37; 283-284.
2. Ibid. XII 8.64.
3. Dbh. XII.8 65-66.
   Kūrma P. 12.6-10.
   Śiva P. 7.1.6.29; 2.1.6.19-24.
   Viṣṇu P. V.2.7-21.
   Bhāgavata P. I.3.34.
4. Ibid. XII.8,66-67.
   Bhagavata P. III.4.11.
   Śiva P. 2.3.5.27.
5. Dbh. XII.8.68.
   Śiva P. 2.3.5.22.

and *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśa* are of the nature of the three *Guṇas*. *Brahmā* is known as the gross body; *Viṣṇu* the subtle body and *Rudra* as the causal Body and I am known as *Turīya*, transcending all the *Guṇas*.[1] This *Turīya* form of mine is called the state of equilibrium of the *Guṇas*. It is the inner controller of all.[2] Beyond this there is another state as called the formless *Brahman* known as *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa*, with or without attributes. That which is beyond *Māyā* and the *Māyic* qualities is called *Nirguṇa* and that which is within *Māyā* is called *Saguṇa*.[3]

*Devī* as *Brahman*, after creating this universe, enters within that, as the controller of all and impells all the *Jīvas* to their due efferts to all actions. It is she who engages *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra*, the causes of the sevcral works of creation, preservation and destruction of this universe.[4] She is the best and superior to all. She makes all the beings to dance like inert wooden dolls as Her mere instruments. She is the integral whole and *Sacchidānda* i.e. complete in it:[5]

*Tattvas*

In *Śākta* philosophy the number of *Tattvas* is thirty-seven as in Śaivism.[6] It may be considered a special feature of Kashmira Śaivism from which *Śakti*-worshippers incorporated these in their own philosophy. The five element (*Mahābhūtas*); five *Tanmātras*; five organs of action (*Karmendriyas*). five organs of perception (*Jñānendriyas*); five *Prāṇas*, seven *Dhātus*, *tvak* etc., mind, intellect, Ego, *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*, *Prakṛti*, *Puruṣa*, (*Rāga*, *Vidyā*, *Kalā* etc.), fate, *Kalā*, *Māyā*, *Śuddhavidyā*, *Maheśwara*, *Sadāśiva*, *Śakti*, *Śiva* etc.

There is 37th *Tattva* named *Parama Śiva*, which is of the nature of bliss itself.[7]

1. Devi Bhāgvata P. XII.8.69-73.
2. Ibid. XII.8.74.
3. Ibid. XII.8.74-75.
   Kūrma P. 12.44.
4. Ibid. XII.8.76-79.
5. Ibid. XII.8.78-84.
6. Ibid. XI. 10.16-19.
7. Chatterji (J.C.), Kashmir Saivism, p. 147.

*Śaktism* divides the manifested into 36 categories of the 36 *Tattvas*. The first twenty-five Tattvas, viz. from *Puruṣa* to earth, are the same as in the *Sāṅkhya* system with some variations; and one *Māyā* is adopted from the *Vedānta*. Of the remaining ten, first five are the aspects of the ultimate reality, and the rest five tattvas represent the limitation of an individual self.

*Śiva-Śakti* :—

*Śiva-Śakti* as the ultimate reality is the stuff of which the world is made as well as the instrument which makes it. It is the characteristic feature of *Śaktism* that it does not regard the world to be unreal since *Śakti* who is 'all reality' is the cause of it. The mundane world is brought into being by *Śakti*. In this respect the basic powers of *Śiva* are *Cit Sakti*, *Ānanda-Śakti* *Icchā Śakti*, *Jñāna Śakti* and *Kriyā Śakti*. Endowed by these powers *Śiva* manifests himself by his own will, being himself as the ground.[1] According to the tenets of *Śaktism*, the individual souls are bound to the pluralistic world through ignorance and the release is only possible through the knowledge of *Śakti*.[2]

The inseparability of *Śiva* and *Śakti* is the basic conception which is most appealing and fascinating to the human mind. *Śiva* and *Śakti* are ultimately one and the same.[3] They are two modes of eternal and infinite power. Kālidāsa describes them (Jagatah Pitarau).[4] Though one, yet for the sake of convenience, we may call *Śiva* as static and *Śakti* as Kinetic energies. *Śiva* is knowledge and Parvati is *Śakti* or force. Knowledge without power is impotant and power without knowledge is a blind force.[5] Thus when the *Jñāna* or *Prakāśa*

1. Srī Kaṇṭha Bhāṣya, 1,2; Śiva P. 7.2.4.1-4.
2. Sapta Śatī 1.54.58.
3. Śiva Purāṇa. Vāyu Samhitā. Part II.4.9-11; 5.87.14
   Sūta Samhitā —Yajña Vaibhava Khaṇḍa 13.3-5.
   Linga P. II.11.1-34.
   Bhāgavata P. X.83.3.
4. Raghu Vamśa 1.1.
   Śiva P. 2.2.31.25.
5. Śiva P. 2.3.5.29.
   Chatterji (J.C.), Kashmir Śaivism, p. 71.

or perception side is emphasized, it is called *Śiva*, and when the *Vimarśa* or activity side is emphasized it is called *Śakti*. Together they form a single entity called *Prakāśa-Vimarśa-rūpa*. In an elevated state of mental perfection we have *Sāmarasya* of *Śiva* and *Śakti*.

The conception of *Śiva* and *Śakti* is symbolized by the *Liṅga* and the *Gaurī Peeth.*[1] For human propagation, the father and the mother are the causes. In the remote past people were very much astonished by the process of procreation and hence they acquired a worshipping attitude towards it. In order to symbolise this idea they made a Linga of stone to designate the male principle and to designate the female aspect they had a pedestal (*Pīthikā*) of stone or metal. So this is how the *Liṅga-Yoni* worship spread in such a vast manner.[2]

In the Ṛgveda, this fundamental principle was explained by the conception of father sky and mother earth. For the very being of the universe the sky and earth are indispensable. In the Ṛgveda these were regarded as sustaining all the worlds. The notion of procreation was given by the idea of the fertilising mother-earth by the father-sky through the rains. In the *Skanda Purāṇa*,[3] it is said that sky is *Liṅga* and earth is *Pīthikā*. In fact, the Linga worship is a symbol of universal creation and it is expounded reasonably in Śaivism.

As the ultimate cause of the universe *Śiva* is regarded as comprising in Himself the male and female forces. In fact the theory of *Śiva* and *Śakti* was foreshadowed in the Ṛgveda in the joint panegyric of Heaven and earth (*Dyāyā-Pṛthivī*) and the same was later on explained in Śaivism by the conception of *Ardha-nārīśvara*. *Śiva* fully corroborates the inseparability of the male and female principles, and he comprises both in Himself.[4] It also shows that two opposit principles, the male

1. Linga P. II.47.8.
   Śiva P. 7-2.4.65.
2. Ṛgveda. VI.51.5; I.160.2.
3. Skanda P.
4. Bhaviṣya P. Uttara Parva, 24.35.

and the female are apparently paradoxical but complementary to each other in reality. Thus *Śiva* as the cosmic force combines in Himself these cosmic forces for the evolution of this world. The *Ardha-nārīśvara* aspect was highly employed in artistic representations. We get highly artistic Ardha-nārīśvara icons. This aspect gives us a complete picture of life.

*Śiva* and *Śakti*, engaged in erotic play are represented in many images of Khajuraho. In these, *Śakti* sits with *Śiva*. The two forces regard each other with intense emotion and they gaze at each other with a great rapture. The secret knowledge, that though seemingly two, they are fundamentally one,[1] has been employed in art.

*Theory of Vibhutivāda* :

For those, who advocate monotheism, it becomes essential to establish some means to show the relations of the God with the world or worldly things. Whatever is there in the world, which is important, essential, shining or powerful, all that is said belonging to the deity, under the heading '*Vibhūtis* of the god',[2] it is well-propounded in the *Gītā* and in all the *Purāṇas*. All the five cults pertaining to five deities viz. *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, *Durgā*, *Skanda* and *Gaṇeśā*; have included this theory to illustrate the magnanimity and pervasiveness of their deity.

In the *Śākta Purāṇas* we find that the world is pervaded by *Śakti* i.e.[3] every bit is filled with her existence and power inherent. She is the essence of every protocon and atoms. Extraordinary power, glory, fame, wealth, intellect, grace, possessed by the beings is due to her grace, it is a part of her, rather a visible modification of that unmanifest.[4]

She is having so many *Vibhūtis*, exhibited in the world. For instance, She is the power of *Indra*, *Kubera*, wind, water,

1. Images were shown in the centenary Exhibition of 'Archaeological Survey of India', held in Delhi.
2. Bhagavadgīta, Ch. X.1-42.
   Skand P. 5. Avanti Khaṇḍa 19.26-31.
   Kūrma P. 12.216-224.
   Sapta Śatī 5.10-80.
3. Skanda P. 7. Arbuda Khaṇḍa 22.2; 24.
4. Ibid. 7.3.54.

*Yamarāja*, *Śiva* and fire. She is the moonlight of the moon, burning heat of the sun, form of *Viṣṇu*, *Brahmā* and destructive power of *Rudra*. She is mind, or heart in the beings, intellect of the human race, presiding deity of *Pañca Mahābhūtas* (gross elements), form of word, creation of the universe, and the uni -verse itself. She is *Mantra*, *Cit Śakti*, *Mahāmāyā*, and the final authority i.e., *Brahman*.[1] She is beauty in all the ladies and is said to be possesed of all the *Aṇimādi Siddhis*.

Knowledge of the learned, final salvation of the beings[2], glory of the glorious persons, prosperity in the houses, love of the wordly people, grace of the make up, peace of the sages, enjoyment of the luxurious one, fame, development in the life, illusion of the ignorant, limits of the oceans, all these are the various forms of Devi, by which she exhibits her greatness, magnanimity and glory.[3] It is said that every woman in the world is a miniature incarnation of Devi.[4] She is Mother of the world, *Śrī*, *Umā*, anger, light, darkness, ignorance, *Mahāviayā* sky, water, *Devas*, support of the world and protection of the people.[5] She is *Mokṣa* and *Parāgati*, she is all the relations in the world, and she pervades whole of this universe with her power.[6] She is one with *Śiva* or supreme deity, never separated like the *Jyotsnā* of the moon.[7]

Thus we have discussed the development of Śaktism in the *Purāṇas*. All the *Purāṇas* are full of her majestic grace and superiority over all other gods. Sometimes we find the *Purāṇas* eulogising her as *Brahman*, while others specifically the power of *Śiva*, the *Śaktīmān*. A few *Purāṇas* like *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Brahma Vaivarta*

1. Skanda P. 7.1.16.19; Arbuda Khaṇḍa 22.22; 34.
   Kūrma P. 12.216-224.
2. Ibid. IV.2.72.37-49.
3. Ibid. 5. Avanti Khaṇḍa. 19.25-31.
   Ibid. I.2.65.51-62.
   Sapta Śatī. 5.10-80.
4. Ibid 6.145.60-62.
5. Ibid. 3.1.18.40-47.
   Ibid. 7. Arbuda Kaṇḍa 22.19-25.
6. Ibid. 7.3.54-83.
7. Ibid. 1.3.21.10-31.

*Purāṇa*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and *Nārada Purāṇa*—hold the view that she also belongs to *Viṣṇu* or *Kṛṣṇa* and call her as *Vaiṣṇavī Śakti*. But it is very striking that while she as *Umā* or *Pārvatī* is called the consort of Siva, she is never called the wife of *Viṣṇu*, though the power of *Viṣṇu* she may be. Mostly the *Purāṇas* depict her gracious nature, always working for the benefit of the people, specially for the poor and helpless ones. She incarnates in the world only as the benefectress of the world and the gentle fellows. She is affectionate to her devotees like their mother and always seen in the *Varada* and *Abhaya* poses—discarding all their troubles and fear and fulfilling all their desires. She gives both i.e. *Bhukti*, the enjoyment and *Mukti*, the final salvation. That is why the *Purāṇas* are tempted to say that she is the only deity to be meditated upon and to be worshipped for both, viz. the betterment in the life and for the spiritual upliftment i.e. identification of the soul with the goddess *Parā Śakti*.

## CHAPTER III

## ŚAKTI IN THE UPA-PURĀṆAS.

*The Upa-Purāṇas* :—

The *Upa-Purāṇas* are valuable records of Indian life and thought, but it is a matter of great surprise that very little has been known about these. Scholars never cared to peep into these works, by saying that these are sectarian works. The work done by a few scholars on the *Upa-purāṇas* is of very little importance. It is only Dr. R.C. Hazra, who very recently has worked hard to study the *Upa purāṇic* lore, the hidden treasure of the cultural and religious life in Ancient and medieval India. He has published two volumes on '*The Studies in the Upa-purāṇas*'. These volumes have been helpful in revealing the importance of the *Upa-purāṇic* literature before the learned world. These *Upa-purāṇas* afford us great insight into all phases and aspects of Hinduism viz. its mythology, philosophy, festivals, ceremonies, and its ethics. These works supply us with important information about the different branches of science and literature, developed in ancient India.[1] In these respects, these are rather more important than the *Mahā-purāṇas*. The *Upa-purāṇas* attained an authoritative position from an early date; among the sactaries of different sects and the writers of *Nibandhas*, on the topics varying from details on ceremonies to moral works of daily life.

*Number* :

Following the tradition of the *Mahā-purāṇas*, orthodox opinion tries to limit the number of the *Upa-purāṇas* rigidly to eighteen, even in those cases, where the promulgators of such opinion are fully conscious of the existence of a large

1. Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. I. p. 26.

number.[1] While in the enumerations of the *Purāṇas* there is almost complete agreement with regard to the titles, this is by no means the case with the titles of the *Upa-purāṇas*. It has been very clearly pointed out by R.C. Hazra who produced the different lists of the titles of the *Upa-purāṇas*.[2] He has mentioned 23 lists,[3] found in the various *Purāṇas* or *Upa-purāṇas*, generally quoted by the *Nibandhakāras*, showing their divergency over the titles of the *Upa-purāṇas*. Besides the *Upa-purāṇas* mentioned, in these lists there are many others, either in printed form, or in manuscripts, or known from references and quotations. We can only say that the *Upa-purāṇas* are very rich in number, amounting not less than one hundred.

*Date* :

Though there may be some *Upa-purāṇas* of later dates but it is definite, on the basis of accepting them as anthority by the *Nibandhakāras*[4], that the group of the *Upa-purāṇas* cannot be dated later than 850 A.D. As the mention of the titles of the *Upa-*

1. Bṛhaddharma P.—after mentioning that the Upa-purāṇas are 18. 1.25-27
2, Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas, Vol. I, p. 1-21.
3. Ibid.
   (i) Kūrma P. I.1.17-20. quoted in Niytāchara-Pradipa by Raghunandan; in Vira-Mitrodaya by Hemādri, and in Śabda Kalpadrūma.
   ( ii ) Saura Saṁhitā of Skanda P.
   ( iii) Skanda P. V. iii. Revākhaṇḍa I.46-52.
   ( iv) Revā-Māhātmya.
   ( v ) Skanda P.,Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa I.2.11-15.
   ( vi) Śiva Māhātmya Khaṇḍa of Sūta Saṁhitā of Skanda P. I.13b.
   (vii) Garuḍa P. I.223.17-20.
   (viii) Padma P.—Pātāla Khaṇḍa, 3.94b-98.
   ( ix) Devī Bhāgavata, I.3.13-16.
   ( x ) Bṛhaddharma P. I.25.23-26.
   (xi ) Brahma Vai. P. quoted in Vīrā Mitrodaya and in Bhaktiratnākāra.
   (xii) Ekāmra P. I.20b-23.
4. Mention of 18 Upa-purāṇas.
   Kūrma P. quoted by the Nibandhakāras before 850 A.D.
   ( i ) Raghunandana—in his Smṛti Tattva (I.7.92-98).

*purāṇas* has been made in the *Mahāpurāṇas*-viz. the *Kūrma Purāṇa*, the *Matsya Purāṇa*, only mentioning four, *Sūta Saṁhitā* or *Skanda Purāṇa, Garuḍa Purāṇa, Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*; the date of formation of the group may be placed approximately between 650 and 800 A.D.[1] But this cannot limit the scope of early origin of the *Upa-purāṇic* literature. It is not possible to place all the works in one date because they deal with different sects and their nature and contents differ widely. We may find the references and traces of the scattered *Upa-purāṇic* works developing and originating in the end of the Gupta period.[2] The *Matsya Purāṇa* considers the *Upa-purāṇas* as mere sub-sections of the *Purānas*; this view is widely accepted in the *Purāṇas* themselves and by the *Nibandhkāras*.

Just like the *Purāṇas*, the *Upa-purāṇas* are also said to have five characteristics viz. creation, recreation,genealogy of gods, Kings and sages, Manu-periods of time, and history of the royal dynasties as well as the families of sages.[3] But the *Upa-purāṇic* literature is more exclusively adopted to suit the purposes of local cults and the religious needs of different sects than the *Mahā-purāṇas*, and arose at a time when the genealogies began to be neglected, and is never serious about these five characteristies. These works altogether neglect the genealogies of the kings and sages. If at all these works mention some important names of the kings, no care is taken about their correctness, and the myths or the stories have been fabricated and woven around these important personalities. This literature more or less is full of descriptions of a particular deity, ceremonials in her honour, descriptions of some parts of India as well as politics, science, iconography, warfare and so on.[4]

( ii) Mitra Mishra—in his Vira Mitrodaya (Paribhāsā Prakāsh), p. 13-14.

(iii) Hemādri in Caturvarga—Cintāmaṇi, I.p. 532-33. II.i, p. 21,

(iv) Narsiṁha Vājapeyin in Nityāchāra Pradīp, I, p. 19.

( v) Vallālasena in Dānasāgara, p. 3.

1. Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. I, p. 25.
2. Ibid.
3. Śaura P. 9.4-5.
4. Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. I, p. 26.

*The Śākta Upa-purāṇas :—*

Though we find ample material pertaining to Devī-worship in the Major *Purāṇas* like *Markaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, *Vāmana Purāna*, *Varāha Purāṇa*, *Kūrma Purāṇa*, *Śiva Purāṇa*, *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*,[1] and lastly *Devī Bhāgavata* (not accepted by all as *Mahā Purāṇa*)—but it is only in the *Upa-purāṇas* that we find the complete works dedicated to the cult of *Śakti*. The *Upa-purānas* are related very often to the central goddess and sometimes to one or other of her principal forms such as *Durgā*, *Kālī*, *Chaṇḍī*, *Satī* etc.[2] The three *Upa-purāṇas* viz. the *Devī Purāṇa*, *Kālikā Purāṇa*, and *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa* are in printed form and deal with *Śakti* worship. We may agree with R. C. Hazra's view that all these three *Upa-purāṇas*, must have been written in Bengal, rather its eastern part or Assam.[3] Now we will investigate the individual *Upa-purāṇas*.

*The Devī Purāṇa* :

It is one of the most important and the oldest *Upa-purāṇa* dealing mainly with the exploits and worship of Devi, known as Vindhyavāsinī.[4] It gives us important information about the original nature of the goddess,[5] about Yoga,[6] and the method of its practice, about *Śākta* iconography,[7] the *Śākta* vows and the worship.[8] It also furnishes information regarding the construction of towns and forts,[9] about the science of medi-

1. Mārkandeya P. Chs. 81-93.
   Vāmana P. Chs. 17-21 and Chs. 51-56.
   Varāha P. Chs. 21-28 and Chs. 90-96.
   Kūrma P. I. chs. 11-12.
   Skanda P. various sections.
   Śiva P. Umā Saṁhitā—Vāyu Saṁhitā.
   Brahma Vaivarta P. Prakṛti Khaṇḍa.
   Devī Bhāgavata P.. as a whole it is a compendium cf Śakti-worship.
2. Hazra (R.C.). Studies in the Upa-purāṇas. Vol. II. p. 2.
3. Ibid p. 14.
4. Ibid. p. 36.
5. Devī P. ch. 79
6. Ibid. ch. 10.
7. Ibid., ch. 30.
8. Ibid. ch. 22.
9. Ibid. ch. 72.

cine,[1] about holy places alongwith the names of the countries and towns of historical value.[2]

The *Devī-Purāṇa*, consisted of 128 chapters, begins abruptly with an opening verse[3] without any introduction. The name of the reporter is unknown but he gives us information that *Vaśiṣṭha*, requested by the sages will recite the *Purāṇa*.[4] Vasistha divides the *Purāṇa* in four sections called *Pādas*.

I. The first *Pāda*, called as *Trailokya Vijaya* deals with the origin of Devī at the beginning of creation.

2. The seeond *Pāda*, known as *trailokyābhūdaya*, deals with the story of *Indra*, the killing of *Dundubhi*, *Ghora's* rise, Devī's descent on the *Vindhyas* and the numerous forms of Devi.

3. The third *Pāda* is named as *Śumbha-Niśumbha-Mathana*.

4. The fouth *Pāda*, not clearly named, deals with Andhak's fight; war between *Kārtikeya* and the demon *Tāraka*, origin of *Umā-Kālī*, and residence of the Mothers in different regions for the good of children.

The present *Devī Purāṇa*, unfortunetely, does not contain the whole of the original *Devī Purāṇa*,[5] as we can infer by the study of the contents of the *Purāṇa* as given in the first chapter and by the study of the whole text. In the present *Devī Purāṇa* we find only those topics which are said to be the topics of the second *Pāda*.[6]

The *Devī Purāṇa* is certainly an old work though it has not been included in any of the comparatively early lists of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, and the *Upa-purāṇas* in the different *Purāṇic* and non *Purāṇic* works.[7] As a large number of *Nibandhakāras*, both early and late, has quoted from this *Purāṇa*, the *Purāṇa*

1. Devī. P. ch. 108-110.
2. Ibid ch. 38,
3. Ibid. I.1.
4. Hazra (V.C.). Studies in the Upa-purāṇas. Vol. II, p. 37.
5. Ibid. Vol. II. p. 67.
6. Ibid.
7. It is only in the Ekāmra P. (A work of Orissa) that the Devī Purāṇa has been included in the list of 18 Upa-purāṇaṣ.
   —Ibid. Vol. II, 1. p. 13.

is to be placed not later than about 600 A.D.[1] In this *Purāṇa* we also find references showing the prevalence of the worship of *Brahmā*, the deity, thrown into the background towards the beginning of the 7th century A.D.[2] Hence it can be said that the *Devī Purāṇa*, as we have it now, comes down from the 6th century A.D. and most probably from its latter half.[3]

About the place of origin of this *Purāṇa* we can better quote[4] : 'the *Devī Purāṇa* is an East Indian work, written in Bengal, near about *Tāmluk*, where situated, a famous temple of the goddess *Vindhyavāsinī*.'"[5]

The language, is mainly *Prākṛt* and *Apabhraṁsa* which forms the basis of the *Un-pāṇinian* Sanskrit of this *Purāṇa*, and thus it occupies a unique position in the *Purāṇa* literature from the linguistic point of view.[6] It is said that this *Un-pāṇinian* language is not mainly due to the influence of *Mahāyana* Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit found in *Mahāvastu* etc. but it is based on the language of the *Pauṣkara Saṁhitā*.[7] In spite of its *Tāntric* elements, the *Devī Purāṇa* attained a great prominance as an authoritative work. It was so much popular that some enthusiastic *Śāktas* thought it to be the original *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, on account of its dealing with the glory, exploits and method of worship of Bhagavatī Durgā.[8]

*The Kālikā Purāṇa* :

The study of the Kālikā Purāṇa, discloses that the *Śākta* cult in its various phases was a predominant religion in Assam during the medieval period.[9] According to the *Devī Purāṇa*, the *Devī* was worshipped in different forms in *Kāmā-*

1. Hazra (R.C.). Studies in the Upa-purāṇas. Vol. II. p. 77.
2. Farquhar, Outline of the religious literature of India, p. 148, and 179-180.
3. Studies in the Upa-puraṇas, Vol. II, p. 77.
4. Ibid, p, 90.
5. Daśa-Kumāra-Charitam, Ucchvasa VI. p. 149.
6. Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II, p. 143
7. Ibid. See also footnote 355a, p. 181.
8. Kṛtya Ratnākara, p. 358:
9. Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXIII, No. 4. p. 322.

*khyā* and *Kāmarupa*.[1] The *Kālikā Purāṇa*, a religio—ritualistic work, was written probably in Assam sometime in the 10th century A.D.[2]

The present *Kālikā Purāṇa* containing 93 chapters has, in main, two parts; the earlier section gives in detail the various accounts of *Śiva* and his consort *Pārvati*,[3] the stories of the birth of *Kāmadeva*, marriage of *Śiva*, sacrifice performed by *Dakṣa*, origin of the river *Siprā*, marriage of *Arundhati*, fight between *Varāha* and *Śarabha*, conquest and death of *Naraka* and finally the story of *Betāla-Bhairava* and their pilgrimage to *Kāmarupa*. The sections in the 2nd part give descriptions of the worship of various gods and goddesses, and the accounts of the creation of the sacred places—*Pīthas* by the fall of the different limbs of the body of the goddess *Satī*. It further incorporates a few chapters on the duties of the kings.[4]

As one of the most important *Purāṇa*, it is regarded as an authority by the *Nibandha-Kāras*, especially with regards to *Śakti*- worship.[5] It is very important from the point of view, that it deals in detail with the rivers, mountains, flora and fauna as well as with the cultural and religious history of Ancient Assam,[6] called *Kāmarūpa*. It records the progress made in the state under the rulership of the king *Naraka*, who has migrated from *Mithilā*; as well as it also depicts the chaos prevailing in the state under the *Malechha*-rule. This *Purāṇa* also attempts to regularise and codify the religious duties what the *Smṛtis* had left.[7] It prescribes the worship of Śakti in her

1. Devī P. 39.14; 42.9.
2. (a) Barua (B K.), A Cultural History of Assam. Vol. 1, p. 141.
   (b) Barua (K.L.), Early History of Kāmarupa, p. 163.
   (c) Hazra (R C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II, p. 245.
   (d) Gode (P.K.), Studies in Indian Literary Studies, Vol. V., p. 203. Under Singhi Jain Series No. 37.
   (There is a long discussion by the learned scholar about the date of Kālikā Purāṇa. He has also concluded that the Purāṇa was composed before 1000 A.D.).
3. Kālīkā P, chapters—1-50
4. Kālikā P chapters—fifty onwards describe the goddesses viz. Kālī, Mahāmāya, Durgā, Kāmākhyā, Ugrachaṇḍā, Matangi and so on.
5. Hazra (R C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇa, Vol. II, p. 235.
6. Kakati (B.K.), The Mother goddess Kāmākhya. Preface p. vi.
7. Dunken (J), article in 'Purāṇa', Jan. 1963. p. 25.

manifold forms as *Girijā*, *Devī*, *Bhadrakālī*, *Kālī*, *Mahāmāyā*, and others. It also gives in detail the *Bali* ceremony and draws a list of the animals to be offered to *Devī*.[1]

*The Mahā-Bhāgvata Purāṇa* :—

It is an *Upa-purāṇa* dealing with the praise of *Devī* and her worship.[2] It is different from *Vaiṣṇava Mahā Purāṇā* called *Bhāgavata* or *Mahā-bhāgavata*. It is mentioned only in the *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa*,[3] as *Mahā Purāṇa*, and is a comparatively late work. It is very important and interesting for the study of Hindu religion and society in Bengal specially in its eastern part adjacent to *Kāmarūpa*.[4]

This *Purāṇa* opens with four *Mangala Ślokas*, containing the salutations to Devi, the *Ādyā Prakṛti*. About the origin of this *Purāṇa*, the first chapter records a tradition that *Vyāsa*, the author of the *Purāṇas*, was not satisfied mentally even after writing 'the eighteen *Purāṇas*', and went to the *Himālayas* for realising the true nature of Devi, by means of austerities, and enable himself to write a *Mahā-purāṇa* dealing elaborately with the praise of *Bhagavatī*. Being pleased, Devī appeared in person before Vyāsa, and revealed the *Purāṇa* named the *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa*.

This *Purāṇa* advocates that *Kālī*, who is *Parama Brahman* as well as *Parā Prakṛti*, is the wife and *Śakti* of *Śiva*.[5] Though it is mainly a *Śākta* work, but it praises *Śiva*-worship also in strong words. It deals mainly with the praise of Devī, her incarnations to destroy the demons, their exploits, praise of *Kāmarūpa*, and fifty one *Peeṭhas* of Devī.

It was written sometimes during the tenth or 11th cenury A.D., either in *Kāmarūpa* or in that part of Bengal which was very near to it.[6] This *Purāṇa* was highly popular work[7]

1. Kālikā Pu.āna, ch. 71.
2. Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II, 261.
3. Bṛahaddharma P. I.25.20.
4. Hazra (R.C ), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II, 261.
5. Mahābhāgavata P. 15.16.
6. Ibid. 81.13.14; 81.32-35.
7. Hazra (R.C.). Stūdies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II. p. 83, p. 277-83.

and was studied widely as an authoritaiive *Purāṇa* a few centuries ago.

A study of the *Purāṇa* shows that the author of this work lived in a society in which the sects like *Śaivas*, *Śāktas*[1] and *Vaiṣṇavas* were flourishing and was seriously influenced by Tantricism. People at that time studied the *Agamas* and followed Tantric manners, customs and methods of worship.[2] Even in their conception of the forms of the deities, they were guided by the *Tantras*.[3] So the author of the *Mahābhāgavat* praised *Varṇa śrama Dharma* and tried to bring about a compromise between the two systems.[4] Lastly *Mahā-Bhāgavata* advocates *Śaiva* tendency of *Śaktism* though it also follows *Vedanta* in establishing the oneness of the gods.[5]

*Coucept of Śakti in Devī Purāṇa* :—

The *Devī Purāṇa* is a great authority on *Śakti* worship and consequently is a work of extensive use. In this *Purāṇa* or *Upa-purāṇa* Devi appears mainly as a war-goddess.[6] She is *Ādyā Śakti* and is not different from *Śivā Devī*.[7] She is named as *Chāmnṇḍa* and saved the life of *Viṣṇu*, in times of yore from the rage of *Kālāgni Rudra*. *Chāmuṇḍa* is said to be the powerful *Śakti* i.e. able to create, protect and destroy the universe.[8]

In this *Purāṇa*, *Chāmuṇḍa* is told to be the burning flame of the fire of time, and is able to pacify the earthly fire.[9] She is said of the black complexion, besmeared with *Sindūra*, emitting the white rays of lusture. She is the Controller of the gods like *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Śiva*; as well as the creator and ruler of the gods, demons, human beings and semi-divine beings, as well as birds, animals and inanimate beings.[10]

1. Mahābhāgavata. 67.61.
2. Ibid. 8.72; 12.37; Chs. 44-45.
3. Ibid. Ch. 43 mentions Devī's Purāṇic and Tantric forms.
4. Ibid. 8.77-82.
5. Ibid. 7.63-64; 10.42 and 64 and so on.
   Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II, p. 283.
6. Ibid. Vol. II, p. 90.
7. Devī P. 5.60.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. 6.11.
10. Ibid. 6.19-34.

*Chāmuṇḍa* is said to be living in the cemetry grounds,[1] and is ascribed with the work of destruction of the enemies. She is also said to be the fulfiller of all the desires.[2] At the same time she provides with religious merits, final salvation and wordly enjoyments.[3] She is the prime force belonging to Śiva, Viṣṇu and other gods. She is the great goddess, said to be having varied forms.[4] She is eternal, pervading in all the beings, and progenitor of all the desires including the mental thinking.[5]

Nārada eulogises Devī,[6] who, though originating from *Rudra*; creates and protects *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva* and is known under different names, viz., *Durgā*, *Śākambharī*, *Gaurī*, *Vindhya Vāsinī*, *Kātyāyani*, *Kauśiki*, *Kaiṭabheśwarī*, *Mahā Devī*, *Mahābhogā*. *Mahā Śvetā*, *Maheswarī*, *Tridaśavandinī*, *Iśānī*, *Bhavīnī*, *Bhūtabhavīnī*, *Jyeṣṭhā*, *Śaṣṭhi*, *Brahmavādinī*, *Aparṇā*, *Kapālā*, *Suvarṇā*, *Gāyatrī*, *Sāvitrī*. *Ekapāṭalā*, *Triśūlinī*, *Trinayanā*, *Tripadā*, *Trigunātmikā*, *Śraddhā*, *Swāhā*, *Lakṣmi*, *Sarvajñā*, *Sarvatobhadrā*, *Sarvotokṣi* *Śiromukhā*, *Sarvabhutādimadhyāntā*, *Sarvalokeśwarī*, *Mānavī*, *Yādavi*, *Yoganidrā*, *Vaiṣṇāvī*, *Arupā*, *Bahūrūpā*, *Surūpā*, *Kāma rūpinī*. *Śailrājasutā*, *Sādhavi*, *Mother of Skanda*, *sister of Kṛṣṇa*, *Sṛuti*, *Smṛti*, *Kālarātrī*, *Mahārātrī*, *Bhadrakālī*, *Kapālinī*, *Chāmuṇḍa*, *Chandrikī*, *Chaṇḍī*, *Chaṇḍa-Muṇḍa-Vināśinī*, *Rudrāṇī*, *Pārvatī*, *Indrāṇī*. better half of *Śiva*, *Dākṣāyanī*, *Nārī*, *Nārāyāṇī*, *Śumbha-Niśumbha-Damanī*, Mahiṣāsuraghātinī, having one thousand eyes, *Dhīrā*, *Revatī*, *Simhavāhinī*, *Viśvavatī*, *Vīryavatī*, *Vedamātā*, *Saraswātī*, *Māyāvatī*, *Bhogāvatī*, *Satī*, *Satyavatī*, performer of all the activities, fulfiller of the desires, affectionate to the devotees and to the helpless persons, *Bhīmā*, *Ugrā*, *Dhūmrā*, *Ambikā*, *Troyambaka-priyā*, *Jayā*, *Vijayā*, *Ajitā*, *Aparājitā*, dweller in the heart and *Pāpanāśinī* and soon. Out of these 108 names of the goddess, 45 are her names identifying the goddess

1. Devī P. 9.54.
2. Ibid. 2.21.
3. Ibid. 2.21a.
4. Ibid; 2.33.
5. Ibid. 6.32.
6. Ibid. ch. 9.

with other goddesses and rests are her appelations denoting her nature and her heroic deeds.

*Sarvarūpā Devī* :—

Devī is to be worshipped at *Kapota Tīrtha* which is compared in sanctity with *Māyāpurī* and *Kāśī*. Here Devī is said *Sarvarupā*. All the gods, human-beings and *Hara*, *Viṣṇu* etc. are said to be the divine forms of Devī.[1] She is the mother, called also *Śivā* as well as *Nārāyanī*. She as *Prākṛiti* is composed of three *guṇas* (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*), and is having three forms *Māhākālī*, *Mahā Lakṣmi*, and *Mahā Saraswatī*), and having *Triśūla* in her hand. She is said to be surrounded by the Mothers.[2] In the image of gold or silver or in *Triśūlā*, she should be worshipped with due devotion.

*Goddess from the lustre* :—

All the *Śākta Purāṇas* agree that the goddess was the name of the united forces of the gods. For that purpose these *Purāṇas* have originated a theory that she was formed of the lustre (*Tejas*) of all the gods [3] The *Devī Purāṇa* says that when *Śiva* was worried about the demons, one *Tejas* appeared before him and changed into a goddess. This very goddess was called *Śakti*, *Kālī* or *Katyāyanī*.[4] This *Tejas* was belonging to *Śiva* who desired to kill the demons.[5] This account with some variations, is found first of all, in the *Sapta Śati* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*.[6] Here it is said that *Viṣṇu* initiated the move by parting his lustre. In *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* also, we find the same account, but here it is added that seeing the lustre, gods being frightened asked her and then they saw a very beautiful demsal, i.e. Devī-standing before them. It seems that author tried to avoid the fearful sight of Devī, called *Bhuvaneśwarī* [7] The same *Purāṇa* again creates the goddess Umā

1. Devī P. 77.7-11.
2. Ibid. 76,21,
3. Sapta Śati 2.13.
4. Devī P. 127.47-60.
5. Ibid. 127.45-48.
6. Sapta Śati—2.9-19.
7. Devī Bhāgavata P. 7.31,25-54.

*Haimavatī* from the *Tejas*.[1]

In *Devī Purāṇa* we find Devī in all pervading form and is honoured by everyone. Even the gods like *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* praise and worship her. Here we see that *Śiva* eulogised *Devī* with *Mahādaṇḍaka* hymn, in which he called Her, *Śiva-Vaktrodbhavā*[2], *Pramatha-Laksha-vṛtā*, *Hema-varṇā*, *Śmasānapriyā*, *Kāmārī*, *Sānkhya-Yogodbhavā Bhadrakālī*, *Mahākālī*, and *Mahā-vṛkshaghaṇṭā-ravodgiti-karṇotsavā*. She is also identified with *Brāhmī*, *Kaumārī*, *Māhendrī*, *Māheśvarī*, *Vaiṣṇavī*, *Varāhī*, *Sarasvatī*,[3] and other female deties. She is said to dwell in *Hemakūta*, *Mahendra*, *Himādri*, *Vindhya*, *Sahya* and *Śrīgiri* mountains as well as on the mountain tops and in the caves.[4]

The chapter 36 describes Devī as the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of the world.[5] She is pervaded in whole of the universe. She is *Nāda-Vindu-rūpiṇī*[6]; having form of *Mantras*,[7] *Śiva-Śakti-Swarūpiṇī*,[8] *Parā* and *Aparā* and having *Virāt* form.[9] She is the destroyer of the enemies, effort in times of war,[10] and is identified with *Kātyāyanī*; *Śūlinī*, *Durgā*, *Gaurī*,[11] and *Chaṇḍī*. She is of the benign nature bestowing peace, happiness, and fearlessness to the devotees.[12]

*Unity of goddess and her pervasiveness* :

She is alone without a second,[13] but due to ignorance, people think her in many ways, and give examples. Some people think that *Rudra* is the cause of the world, others think about *Viṣṇu*, and *Brahmā* but forget that all of them are, but the

1. Devī Bhāgavata P. 12.8.51-57.
2. Devī P. 17.19-31.
3. Ibid. 17.19-26.
4. Ibid. 17.19.
5. Ibid 36.4.
6. Ibid. 36.5-6.
7. Ibid. 36.9.
8. Ibid. 36.11.
9. Ibid. 36.13-14.
10. Ibid. 36.17.
11. Ibid. 36.19, 25.
12. Ibid. 36.32-34. 18.
13. Ibid. 73-79.

form of *Devi*,[1] who is manifested in many ways due to three *guṇas*. As *Sphaṭika Maṇi*, being one, is represented variously due to different colours, similarly goddess is one. Examples given are of the clouds, rain water, wind, odour, fire, to understand Devī's oneness.[2] This visible world is a manifestation of Devī and she pervades it. She is manifested in the form of varied names and bodies. She is said to be praised with Bhakti.[3]

Devī is known under different names. viz. *Nārāyaṇī*, *Tārā*, *Śvetā*, *Mahāśvetā*, *Śivā*, *Gaurī*, *Carcikā*, *Vimalā*, *Umā*, and *Ambikā*.[4] She is to be worshipped by the names *Charchickā*, *Chāmuṇḍā*, *Nandā* on a sword, dagger, footwear, picture, book, flag, bow, image or alter.[5]

Devī is said to be giving the worldly things to her devotees. She is said in her benign forms mainly to be the curer of the diseases specially of the children[6] The various diseases caused by the irregularity of *Vāta*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*, and accidental fractures, even the cases of poisoning, snake-biting, and the wounds caused by nails and teeth all these are cured by her. She can relieve the person from the diseases caused by even bad stars, *Bhūtas* and *Piśachas* etc. The person suffering mentally or physically due to the crimes or sins, may be made free by the goddess Even the murderers may feel mentally relaxed by remembering our goddess.

In a passage in *Devī Purāṇa* there is a very strange statement by *Śiva* that he is the father of Devī and at the same time Devī is his mother.[7] She is his sister as well as his wife. Devi as a sister of *Śiva* was called only in the *Vedic* period, otherwise she is said to be the sister of Vāsudeva

1. Devī P. 37.80-81.
2. Ibid, 37.82.87.
3. Ibid. 37.88-91.
4. Ibid. 98.3-6.
5. Ibid. 98.7-15.
6. Ibid. 6.41-43.
7. Ibid. 127.174-75.

and wife of *Siva* only.[1]

*Kanakeśwarī* :

Devi *Kanakeśwarī* lives in a city, constructed and decorated very beautifully, and the building is also palatial one. She comes to the place in a *Vimāna*.[2] and is worshipped in the following manner.

1. Image of Devi, made of *Candrakāntamaṇi* is worshipped in every house[3] by the ladies, for the sake of a husband.

2. Idol made of *Muktā* is worshipped in the *Puri* of *Sunanda*[4] Devi.

3. Idol of *Sphatika* is worshiped by the ladies for the good of their husband,[5] in their own houses.

Note : In times of *pralaya*, only two goddesses remain while others are absorbed in the goddess.[6]

Goddess *Jayā* has been praised by *Indra* as a protector of the persons who are supportless. She protects all the *devas* headed by *Brahmā*.[7] She is the deity meditated upon through *Yoga*, as the ultimate realty.[8] She is worshipped in the sacrifices with the recitation of the *Mantras*, by the followers of the *Yoga* system and the *Sānkhya* philosophy.[9] She is without beginning and end and is respected even by the God *Śiva*. She is presiding in everyone.[10] She is told to be born from the body of *Śiva*,[11] as well as she is the mother of *Śiva*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Brahmā*, and she invites *Rudra* to destory the world.

*Sarvamaṅgalā* :

The goddess *Sarvamaṅgala*, also called *Mangalarūpinī* is said

1. Devī Bhāgāvata P. VIII.i.24-30.
2. Devī P, 95.29-30.
3. Ibid. 95.38.
4. Ibid. 95.39-40.
5. Ibid. 95.41-42.
6. Ibid. 95.43.
7. Ibid. 15.2,
8. Ibid. 15,8,
9. Ibid. 15.8; 9.
10. Ibld. 15.10.
11. Ibid. 16.16.

to be the destroyer of demon*Rūru*.[1] She is again identified with that *Para Brahma*[2] as well as with the different goddesses of Hindu Pantheon viz. *Bhairavī*, *Durgā*, *Kanyā*, *Kapāli*, *Kālī*, etc.[3]

She is worshipped in the following manner :

1. Worship in the month of *Āśvin or Māgh* or *Chaitra* or *Śrāvana*, from dark 8th day to bright 9th i.e. for 16 days.[4]
2. Observing the fast on the previous and on the *Pūjā* day.[5]
3. Feeding of the Brahmins, Gurus and their worship.[6]
4. Worship of girls and offering of food to them.[7]
5. Worship of Devi with different names.[8]
6. Recitation of the names of Devī.[9]
7. Homa is performed with Devī Mantras.[10]
8. Offering of meat in the Balidāna ceremoy.[11]
9. Arrangements of the cultural programmes,[12] like dancing and musical concerts in the night.
10. Donations according to one's means to Brahmins, teachers and girls.[13]
11. *Rathayātrā Mahotsava* of *Devī*.[14]
12. Mental devotion to *Devī*.,[15], called *Parā Bhakti*.

*Mangalādevī* :

*Devī Purāṇa* says that *Mangalā Devi* may be installed among the group of Mothers (*Mātṛkās*). On the southern side should be installed the goddesses *Brāhmī* etc. and on the Northern side should be placed the goddess *Vaiṣṇavi* and so on.[16]

1. Devī P. 89.3;27.1-2.
2. Ibid. 89.20.
3. Ibid. 80.12-13.
4. Ibid. 89.2.
5. Ibid. 89. 3-6, 16.
6. Ibid. 89.8.
7. Ibid. 89.4, 14.
8. Ibid. 89.12-13, 3, 18-19.
9. Ibid. 89.13.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. 81.7.
12. Ibid. 89.9.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid. 89.7, 17, 22-23.
16. Ibid. 76.21.

*Vindhyavāsinī* :

*Devī Purāṇa* speaks that the gooddess *Vindhyavāsinī* resides constantly in *Vindhya* mountain. She manifested herself on the earth to kill demon *Ghora*. She is called *Nandādevī* when resides in the *Himālayas*. If worshipped with *Mantra*, *Dravya*, *Kriyā* and *Dhyāna*, she fulfils all the desires of the devotees.[1] If worshipped or remembered by the children, ladies or disabled persons, she becomes pleased easily.

The Devi *Vindhyavāsinī* is *a* manifestation of the goddess specially treated in *Devī Purāna*. The *Purāṇa* deals mainly with the exploits and worship of Devī (the great goddess) who incarnated herself on the *Vindhyas*, as a maiden mounted on a lion and became known as Vindhyavāsinī.[2] It is said that to kill the demons *Vajra daṇḍa* and *Kāla*, who were enjoying the supremacy over the three world, and on the request of *Bramhā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, the goddess incarnated on the *Vindhyas* with a lion as her *Vāhana*, and with *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* as her servants and with so many unmarried female deities as her attendants.[3] The sage *Nārada* went to demon *Vajra daṇḍa* to report about the young damsel (Devī),of divine beauty and residing in the *Vindhyas*. After knowing the fact the latter, with the intention of enjoying a mountain girl, marched with his army in an auspicious moment but exprienced various kinds of bad omens including the sight of a person wearing red clothes.[4]

The demon *Ghora* saw *Devī* on the *Vindhya* mountain, and desired having her. He sent his commandor *Durmukha* in the month of *Āśvina* and he was killed by the goddess *Vijayā*.[5] Then a demon named *Kāla* was sent to arrest *Durgā*,[6] and Goddess *Jayā* came to fight with the army of the *asuras* and ultimately after a tough fight *Kāla* was sent to *Yamapuri* by Devī.[7]

1. Devī P. 92.9-11.
2. Ibid. 7.20.
3. Ibid. 7.21-44; 7.1.7.
4. Ibid. 12.1-35.
5. Ibid. 12.63-64.
6. Ibid. 12.70.
7. Ibid. 13.1-28.

*Śiva-Umā* :

There is a *Stotra* in *Devī Purāṇa*, where Devi is said to be the better half of Śiva.[1] In this *Stotra* she is praisd along with *Śiva*. In one verse some of the epithets are of *Śiva* and some of Devī. World is said to be consisted of *Śiva* and *Śakti*[2] only. She is *Sarvamanglā*, cause of all the causes, Lord of all, controller of all the worlds, and propounder of all the Yoga schools. She is *Raudrī* and *Mahāraudrī*, lord of *Rudra*, respected by all the gods and demons, and knowledge Herself. She is incharge of the *Gaṇas*, having limitless power, *Chaṇḍā*, *Durgā*, *Prachaṇḍā*, *Chandśwari*, and *Ugras anchārī*. She is the performer of difficult vows, full of anger, anger incarnate for the destruction of demons, *Nārāyanī*, *Kaumārī*, *Jayā*, *Vijaya*, *Nityā*, *Ajitā*, *Aparājitā*, and success in *tapa* for the devotees. Divine mother is adorned with vowels and consonents, (letters), *Mahāmāyā*, Mother of the *Vedas*, and praised by the *Vedas*, and full of Supreme knowledge. She is *Brahmīṇī*, riding on at swan, and pervaded in the sky, neither regions, in heaven, giver of salvation, and incarnate in all the beings. She is *Kriyā*, *Śakti*, *Kāla*, *Jñāna* and Bhakti. She shares all these qualities with *Śiva*. Both being pleased with gods managed to kill the demon Ruru.[3]

*Kṣemaṅkarī* :

She is identified with primaeval force[4] and appears before the gods when requested by them, to kill demon *Subala* who had troubled the gods. She is having terrible form,[5] appearing as an old lady, emaciated, whose veins are visible, body without flesh, eyes in pits, ears half decorated, worried, with opened mouth, trempling, frightening the world, and equipped with hundreds of weapons. She surrounded with eight *Vidyās*, is situated in the middle of the *Kraunch Dwīpa*.

She always protects gods, therefore is called *Kṣemankarī*.[6]

1. Devī P. 83.46.
2. Ibid. 83.66.
3. Ibid. 83. 47-113.
4. Ibid. 39-121-22.
5. Ibid. 39.136-39.
6. Ibid. 39.166.

She being aged, is especially worshipped in *Pitṛpakṣa* with offerings of *Bali*, meat, fish, wine, gold, according to the ways either of *Kulamārga*, or *Vāma* and *Dakshiṇa* schools of worship.[1]

*Nandā Devī* :

God *Śiva* praises the Himālaya saying that there are four Tirthas on the *Himālayas*, one of them being the Nandā Tīrtha, where all the gods reside.[2] This is the most sacred in the world,[3] as the goddess called Nandā reside her.[4] Months of *Bhādrapada*, *Āṣādha*, *Śrāvaṇa* are said the best months for the pilgrimage to *Nandā Tīrtha*.[5] *Nandāpuri* is a very good place well-equipped with all the luxuries, habitated by the gods and divine damsels waiting for Devī.[6] It can be compared with the *Maṇidvipa* described in the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

*Ruru episode*:

The *Purāṇa* mentions war between the goddess and the demon *Ruru*, a new name in the *Śākta* mythology. From the mouth of peacock of Kartikeya, is originated the demon *Ruru*. By worshipping *Brahmā* he obtained a boon not to be killed by anyone else except the goddess. Gods being troubled by him went to *Viṣṇu* for the sake of protection. *Viṣṇu* praised *Śiva* and *Śakti* for the destruction of *Ruru*, whe fought with *Śiva*, and *Śiva* though not defeated, but was not able to overpower the demon *Ruru*. The *Brahmā* came to help *Śiva* in this fight.

*Brahmāṇī*.

The *Purāṇa* states that *Brahmā* changed His form as *Brahmāṇī*[7] to help *Śiva* in the fight against the demon *Ruru*. From the lustre ot *Brahmā* there arose a goddess having a form of *Brahmāṇī*, full of *Tejas*,[8] having *Kamaṇḍlu*, bow, weapon in her hands, and riding on a chariot yoked by swans. She was destroying the army of the demons like anything.

1. Devī P. 39.171; 176-77; 179.
2. Ibid. 93.5-6.
3. Ibid. 93.22 28-39.
4. Ibid. 93.16.
5. Ibid. 93.58.
6. Ibid. 93.61-102.
7. Ibid. 84.21.
8. Ibid. 84.22-26.

*Durgā*:

*Devī Purāṇa* shows that *Durgā* was included in Indian pantheon by this time. There is an injunction in the *Purāṇa* to worship *Durgā* along with *Gaṇeśa Navagraha* and *Śiva*, while constructing a palace and a city.[1] One of the derivations of the name *Durgā* is the presiding deity of *Durga*, the fort.[2] That is why we find the various names of *Durgā*—as *Giri Durgā*, *Vana Durgā* etc. which show some relation with the varieties of *Durgas* namely *Giri Durga* or *Vana Durga*.

In *Devī Purāṇa* there are instructions regarding the construction of gates (*Gopura*), at both the sides of these should be installed the images of *Devī Mahisa Mardinī*. The gates should also be named after the different names of *Devī*.[3] At the time of the laying down the foundation of the fort, *Bāli* ceremony[4] is to be performed. *Śakti* is having so many forms. Poet says that sometimes she is having ten forms, or hundreds of forms, or innumerable incarnations, and still she is one. She is considered as an authority in all the Vedas and the Vedanta.[5]

Many times the author wants to identify the goddess *Kālī* with the god *Kāla*.[6] The destructive aspects of *Kāla* or *Rudra* (*Kālāgni-rudra*) is also ascribed to the Goddess.[7] The *Śakti* or *Kālī* is said to be the source of the three deities—*Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*. Though she is *Nirguṇā* or un-manifested, She manifests herself in the world in the form of deities.[8] She associates herself with the gods as their consorts and sometimes remains as their creator or instigater, and is called both *Deva Patnī* and *Deva Mātā*.[9]

1. Devī P. 73.58.
2. Ibid. 72.124; 83.63.
3. Ibid. 72.144-150.
4. Ibid. 72.127.
5. Ibid. 6.23; 6-26-31.
   Sapta Sati 10.5.
6. Ibid. 81.4-6.
7. Ibid. 81.11-12.
8. Ibid. 16.14-15; 117.9-10.
9. Ibid. 67.39.

*Devī Purāṇa* is the Bible of Brahmanical Śaktism.[1] It mentions *Tantras* and the *Agamas* frequently and also the *Bauddhas*, who worship the Divine mothers in their own ways. It distinguishes between right-hand and left hand worshippers. The latter were to be found in *Rādhā* and *Varendra* (in Bengal), *Kāmarūpa* and *Kāmākhyā* in Assam; *Bhoṭṭa Deśa* (Tibet) etc. Some of the places it mentions indicate that the *Puraṇa* was written most probably in Bengal.

It is noteworthy that this *Purāṇa* permits the *Pukvasas*, *Chaṇḍālas* and other outcaste groups to perform the rituals and sacrifices to the goddess and even prefers for her worship a virtuous *Śudra* to a worthless member of one of the higher castes.[2] This agrees with the statement in the *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa*, that *Durgā* was worshipped by such aboriginal peoples as the *Śabaras*, *Barbaras* and *Pulindas*, who were addicted to meat and wine. The worship of a married woman and of the virgin girls, as manifestations of Devi, is also prescribe in this Purāṅa.[3]

The *Purāṇa* regards the *Vedas* as the highest authority and mentions the four Vedas. It has prescribed the *Gayatrī Mantra* for *Japa* and various other *Vedic Mantras* have been utilised in the performance of Homa.[4] All this shows a great influence of the Vedas upon it.[5] On the other hand it also exhibits the influence of the *Tantras*.[6] The *Purāṇa* recognises the *Tantras* as an authority and mentions *Tantras* and the *Āgamās* on several occasions even by their names.[7] The form of worship is mainly *Tantric* and requires the use of the *Tantric Mantras*, *Nyāsas* and *Mudrās*.[8] It goes to the extant of prescribing use of wine and

1. Mukerji (R K.), The Cultūre and art of India, p. 168.
2. Devī P. 22.5-6; 23-24; 24.17; 51.4-5; 88.4; 89.19; 91.1.
3. Ibid. 22.19; 35.17-18; 90.21; 91.61; 93.165.
4. Ibid. 1.55; 7.22; 8.6; 10.9; 12.26; 35.23; 72.26; 73.8; 82.11; 93.45.
5. Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II, p. 92.
6. Ibid. Vol. II, p. 92-93.
7. Devī P. 6.31; 39.25; 9.55; 32.43; 39.146; 55.856.22; 88.1; 91.14.
8. Ibid. 7.65-66; 9.56; 68; 26.21-22; 29.14; 77.21-22; 98.40; 93.267 and so on.

meat for the devotees.[1] We can only conclude that this *Purāṇa* is infused with *Tantric* influence from the beginning to end.

The *Purāṇa* is very important as it gives us important information about the different incarnations of Devi and her original nature as well as relationship with *Śiva* and other gods. All the names of the demons, who fought against Devi, occuring in this *Purāṇa* are new one. Though the *Purāṇa* has stressed more on the ritualistic side of the *Śākta* cult, but it also describes various feats of Devī *Vindhyavāsinī* and her manifestations as well as places dear to her.

*Form of Śakti in the Kālikā Purāṇa* :

The *Kālikā Purāṇa* is one of the most important work on *Śakti*-worship.[2] It is informed in the *Purāṇa* itself that the sage *Mārkaṇḍeya*,[3] requested by the sage Kamaṭha and others, recited this *Purāna*. The *Purāṇa* deals in its earlier sections with the following topics—How *Satī* was born of *Dakṣa*, how she had fascinated *Śiva*, and how she was reborn in the *Himalāyas*,[4] and ultimately was married to *Śiva*. Mainly this *Purāṇa* deals with the exploits and worship of *Kali* who is primarily the *Yaganidrā* and *Māyā* of *Viṣṇu*,[5] but later on became the wife of *Śiva* as the dark-complexioned *Śati* or *Kālī*, for the good of the world.[6]

*Dakṣa as a Devotee of Ambikā* :

First time in this *Purāṇa* we find *Dakṣa Prajāpati* to celebrate the worship of Devī (*Viṣṇumāyā*) and performing *Havana* for her so that she may be born in his house as his daughter.[7] She accepted the request on the condition that he would not neglect Her in any circumstances. First time we see that hatred towards the Rudra and Pārvatī (Non-āryan-deities) was removed and they were accepted in the Hindu pantheon.

1. Devī P. 50 iii-18. 28, 30: 118.6; Mahāmānsa in Homa 9.68-69.
. Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II. p. 195.
3. Kālikā P. I.1-20.
4. Ibid. chs. 1-45.
5. Ibid. ch. 5.8.
6. Ibid. chs. 9.24.
7. Ibid. ch. 5.5; 9.1-26.

The *Mahābhāgvata Purāṇa* also says that *Dakṣa* worshipped her so that she may be born as his daughter. The *Purāṇa* also says that even *Himavāna* and *Menā* performed *Tapa*, and were rewarded by her birth as their daugher.[1]

*Yoganidrā* :

*Yoganidrā* is also called *Viṣṇu-māyā*, *Mahāmāyā* and *Yoga-māyā* and is described as the cause of creation, preservation and destruction.[2] In the *Kālikā-Purāṇa* she is said to have taken the form of *Kālikā*,[3] mounting on a lion, having dark complexion, four hands, a beautiful face and red eyes, having a sword and a blue lotus in the two of her hands and assuring boon and safety with the other two. In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* she is identified with *Mahāmāyā*, who deludes the whole world. She is able to lead towards the delusion even the minds of the learned persons.[4] She is supreme eternal knowledge being the cause of *Mokṣa*,[5] and is also the supreme power over all the gods. She is the power of *Viṣṇu* in *Devī Bhāgavata*[6] *P.* and is called *Purāṇa Prakṛti*, having preserved in her own body, the seed of creation.[7]

*Parā Śaktī or Parā Brahman*

The *Kālikā Purāṇa* presents *Devī* as *Parā Śakti*,[8] manifesting herself for the betterment of the world and the protection of the gods, from the terror of the demons. She is identified with *Brahman* and is called the power of each and every being. She illuminates tho world with her own lustre and is residing in the heart of everybody.[9] She is *Vidyā* and *Avidyā* both, thus the cause of release and bondage both. She is the creation and

1. Mahābhāgavata P. & Kālikā P. 41.1-50.
2. Hazra (R.C.), Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II, p. 198.
   Kālikā P. 5.3.
3. Kālikā Purāṇa 8.9-10.
4. Mārkaṇḍeya P. 81.41-42.
5. Ibid. 81-44.
6. Devī Bhāgavata, III.2.25-40.
7. Ibid. III.3.54-56.
   Kālikā P. 12.5-38.
8. Kālikā P. 5.8, 6.74, 24.9-27.
9. Ibid. 5.15-50.

the creator both. Here the author is talking in the terms of Upnişads saying that she is without body or form and also with form. She is the biggest as well as the subtlest, the purest and the darkest. She alone preserves, creates and dissolves the world. She is the knowlege and the knower herself.[1] She is of the nature of bliss, knowledge and *Mantra*. She is *Mahāmāyā* as she deludes all the beings in the world. She is *Anantā* and *Śakti* or *Parā Śakti*. *Śakti* is ever-existing and gives her own *swaroop* to every devotee.[2] She is the *Mūla Prakṛti* and still beyond the reach of our perception.[3] Here it is said that whatever important or powerful is there in the world, it only belongs to *Parā Śakti*.[4]

*Viṣṇu Śakti*:

In the *Purāṇa*, Devi is associated with *Viṣṇu* though she is the wife of *Śiva*.[5] She was requested by Brahma to incarnate in the world as well as to marry *Śiva*.[6] She is also ealled *Kālī*, *Śaṅkarī* and *Rudrāṇī*, when born of *Dakṣa*,[7] and is *Viṣṇu-priyā* also. The *Purāṇa* distinguishes between the *Yoga-māyā*, *Mahāmāyā*, *Viṣṇu-māyā*, *Yoga-nidrā*, and last of all identifies them with Vaiṣṇavī.[8] *Dakṣa* seeing the goddess *Kālī*, praised her as *Lakṣmī*.[9] Even the creation is ascribed to her.[10] As *Māyā* she eludes everyone and in the end she takes away that delusion.[11] For her worship also there are two methods; one is prescribed by *Vaiṣṇavi Tantra* and another by *Durgā Tantra*.[12]

1. Kālikā P. 5.52-60.
2. Ibid. 6.61-74.
3. Ibid. 8.12-26; 50-57.
4. Ibid. 24.11-23; 47.83-85.
5. Ibid. 5.8; 48.34.
6. Ibid. 5.65-71.
7. Ibid. 6.7-10.
8. Ibid. 6.61-74.
9. Ibid. 8.12, 50-53.
10. Ibid. 12.5-38,
11. Ibid. 52.36.
12. Ibid. 62.5.

Thus the *Purāṇa* exhibits an enormous *Vaiṣṇava* influence upon the cult of *Śakti*. It further shows that in its earlyhood the cult of *Śakti* either had no association or little association with *Śiva*. She was associated more with *Viṣṇu* and the worship was consisted of puritan type.

*Marriage account of Śiva and Devī*:

First of all *Śiva* was married to *Satī*—the daughter of *Dakṣa*[1]. Here unlike the other *Purāṇas* it is said that when *Dakṣa* insulted *Śiva* and *Satī*, not inviting them in the sacrifice, *Satī* burnt herself on the *Kailāśa* itself. She did not go to the sacrificial ground, i.e. her fathers house.[2] *Śiva* taking her dead body on his shoulders moved, hither and thither, in a frantic way and the gods with the help of *Śani* made the pieces of that dead body.[3] This is the story of the creation of *Śakti-Pīṭhas*. Later on she was born as *Pārvatī* in the house of *Himavān*.[4] She even was of black colour and was called *Kālī* by her father.[5] She performed *Tapa* to obtain *Śiva* as her husband.[6] She was named as *Umā* by her Mother. The later portion of the story of the marriage of *Śiva* and *Pārvati* is similar to the story described in *Kumāra Sambhava* of *Kālidāsa*. The marriage was arranged by *Nārada* and seven sages—(Here we find the condemnation of *Śiva* which shows that there was a section of the people not worshipping him and his consort). Ultimately *Kālī* was married to *Śiva*.[7] They enjoyed for long living on the Mount *Kailāśa* and gave birth to *Skanda* and *Gaṇeśa*. The author says that *Kālī* is very dear to *Śiva*, and she is half of *Śiva's* body. He gives a new name to both these as *Ardhanārīśvara*.[8]

*Mahāmāyā* :—

She is the presiding goddess of the *Kālikā Purāṇa*.[9]

1. Kālikā P. II.17-20.
2. Ibid. 16.49-50.
3. Ibid. 18.37-54.
4. Ibid. 42.1-42.
5. Ibid. 42.47-48.
6. Ibid. 43.50-53; 44.10-11; 45.13-15.
7. Ibid. 46.44-61.
8. Ibid. 47.21-22; 47.50-57.
9. Ibid. 8.50; 55.1-30; 60.52.

She is the universal Mother called *Ambikā*. She is the *Mūla Mūrtī* and all other goddesses are only her different manifesta tions. She is also known by the names of *Mahiṣāsura-mardinī*; *Durgā*; *Kāmeśwari*, and *Bhadra Kālī*. She is a benevolent goddess, but is also called *Caṅḍikā*.[1] The *Purāṇa* describes her as the most beautiful lady in the world, wearing the golden ornaments and having fair complexion, decked with three eyes and four hands, having the weapon and *Siddha Sūtra* in her right hands and *varada* and *Abhaya* poses in her left hands.[2] She is also said to be having 18 hands. She is lustress like the ten million suns, and is very young. Her Gāyatrī is :—

ओं महामायायै विद्महे त्वां चण्डिकाख्यां धीमहि । धियो या नः प्रचोदयात् ।[3]

She is worshipped with flowers, fragrants, lamp, and all luxurious things along with other goddesses like *Koteśwarī*, *Bhuvaneśwarī*, *Kāmākhyā*, *Mātangī* and *Lalitā* etc.[4] Balidana, meaning the offering of meat of the animals to the goddess is prescribed here in detail.[5] Mahāmāyā is also Kāmākhyā, residing in Kāmarūpa.[6]

There are so many manifestations of *Devī*. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* also gives various names in the following order :

1. *Daśabhujā*—having ten arms, is called *Durgā*.[7]
2. *Aṣṭādaśabhujā*—eighteen handed form is called *Ambikā* who was worshipped by *Rāma* to kill *Rāvaṇa*. She is also called *Vaiṣṇavi*, *Mahāmāyā*[8] and *Ugra Chandā*.[9]
3. *Ṣoḍasā Bhujā*, Sixteen handed goddess is called *Bhadra-Kālī*[10]

1. Kālikā P. 12.65; 50.30-34; 61.6-13.
2. Ibid. 55.25-35; 62.16.
3 Ibid. 56.16.
4. Ibid. 56.35-45.
5. Ibid. 57.1-2; 1-22,
6. Ibid. 60.41-44; 52-59.
7. Ibid. 62.9.
8. Ibid. 62.16.
9. Ibid. 62.18-22.
10. Ibid. 62.54-63; 88.

4. *Daśabhujā*, having ten arms. She is called *Kātyāyanī*, formed out of the lustre of the gods and killed *Mahiṣāsura*.[1]

*Tārā or Chāmuṇḍā* :

Another form of *Mahāmāyā* is *Tārā* or *Chāmuṇḍā*. Her worship was once very popular in Assam and several images of *Chāmuṇḍa* also have been discovered in the province. The following description of *Tārā* or *Chāmuṇḍa* in our text shows a slight difference from the description given in the *Agni Purāṇa*, *Matsya Purāṇa* and *Viṣṇu Dharmottara Purāṇa*.[2]

"Her complexion is like the colour of a blue lotus. She has four arms and in her right hands, she holds *Khaṭvāṅga* and *Chandrahāsa* and in her left hands *Charma* and *Pāśa*. She wears a tiger-skin and puts a garland of skulls on her neck. She is of a slender, long and terrible body, with long teeth, having a protruding tongue, extended ears, vide face and red eyes, sunk in sockets. She is shown seated on Kabandha.[3]

*Kauśikī* :

According to the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, the goddess *Kauśikī* sprang from the body of Kālikā.[4] She is an important deity next to Mahāmāyā. The *Devī Māhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, however states that the goddess *Kauśikī* was born from the body of the supreme goddess in a dazzling beautiful form.[5] the *Kālikā Purāṇa* also represents her in a very pleasing manner.[6]

Her locks are well-controlled in braids and she wears a down turned half moon on her forehead just above the sandal mark (*Tilaka*). Her checks are touched by bejewelled ear-rings; she is adorned with a crown and ornaments. She wears gold necklaces, set with jewells and garland of *Nāgas*. She is wearing a garland of fragrant lotuses,

1. Kālikā P. 62.70-79.
2. Ibid. 63.93-95.
3. This is to some extent resembles to the description given in the Viṣṇudharmatara Purāṇa.
4. Kālikā P. 63.71-74.
5. Ibid. 63.78-86.
6. Sapta Śati. 5.87-91.

and a pair of gem-made armlets. Her tender arms are just like lotus stalks and she wears beautiful yellow garments. She has high breasts, covered with breast-caps, a slender waist and three folds in her belly. In her right hands are a *Śūla*, a *vajra*, a *Bāna*, a sword and a *Śakti*; and in her left hands are a *Gadā*, *a Ghanṭā*, a *Cāpa*, a *charma* and a *conch*. She sits on a tiger skin placed on the back of a lion.

*Dikkarvāsini* :

The *Kālikā Purāṇa* imported a new goddess named *Dikkarvāsinī* who was worshipped in the eastern regin of Assam. The goddess has two forms *Tikshṇa Kāntā* (dreadfully attractive) and *Lalitā Kāntā* (gracefully attractive).[1] Former is of black colour, pot-bellied and with one lock of matted hair so she is called *Ekjatā* also. Her six atteddants are *Chāmuṇḍa*, *Karālā*, *Subhagā*, *Bhiṣaṇā*, *Bhogī*, *Vikaṭā*. Her mode of worship in general, conforms to that of the goddess *Kāmākhyā*, although her most delectable offerings are consisted of strong spirituous liquor, human sacrifice, *Modaka*, flesh, curry, cocoa-nuts and sugar-cane.[2]

She is also called *Ugra Tārā*.[3] In this form her worship was once very popular and even today there is a temple at Gauhati known as *Ugratārā* temple where *Devī* is worshipped particularly in autumn with sacrifice of buffallows, goats etc. It is stated that Ugratārā was originally a benevolent goddess, but subsequently at the curse of the sage Vaṣistha she turned to be a malevolent one and came to be worshipped in the left hand way.[4]

The description of *Ugratārā* in *Kālikā Purāṇa* is different from that given in Tārā Tantra.[5]

1. Kālikā P. 83.13-65.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. 81.20.
4. Ibid. 81.21.
5. Ibid.
   Tārā Tantra
   Śākta Pramoda, p. 131.

*Lalita Kāntā*

She is known more by her popular title Mangala Chaṇḍī.[1] By this name she is worshipped even today in Assam and Bengal. She is to be meditated upon as follows[2]:—She has two arms in *Varada* and *Abhaya* poses, her body is yellow, she sits on a red lotus, and is adorned with a bright crown and is attired in red silk. Her auspicious face is in a constant smile, and her charming body is endowed with fresh youth. Mangla Chaṇḍī is to be meditated either on a picture, or image or a pot.[3] Further, she is to be invoked according to the *Vaiṣaṇavavaite Tantras* and *Mantras* and with those offerings which are generally offered to the goddess *Mahāmāyā*.

*Umā and Rudrāṇī* :—

*Umā* is described having golden complexion and two arms. In her left hand she holds a blue lotus and in the right a white *Cāmara*. She stands on the right side of *Śiva*, resting her hand on him.[4] She is having eight attendant deities viz. *Jayā*, *Vijayā*, *Mātaṅgī*, *Lalitā*, *Nārāyanī*, *Sāvitrī*, *Svadhā* and *Svāhā*. The goddess *Rudrāṇī* is depicted as having two arms and carrying lotus and *Chāmara* in each of them. She sits on a tiger skin placed on a lotus.[5]

*Tripurā Bhairavī* :—

There are a large number of deities that were once worshipped under various forms of goddess *Tripurā*. According to our text these are all different manifestations of the Great Goddess *Mahāmāyā*.[6] The goddess *Tripurā* first manifested herself as a virgin *Kumāri*, later on she divided herself into three forms of *Tripurā* aspect and further into *Gaurī*, *Ramā*, *Bhāratī*, *Kālī*, *Chaṇḍikā*, *Durgā*, *Bhagavatī*, *Kātyāyanī*, *Parā*, *Lalitā*, and

1. Kālikā P. 83.52.
2. Ibid. 40.52; 83.53-54; 66.
3. Ibid. 80.61-64.
4. Ibid. 63.43-45.
5. Ibid. 63 45-46.
6. Ibid. 75.74.

*Maharājñī*.[1] The three different forms of *Tripurā* as detailed in *Kālikā Purāṇa* are *Tripurā Bhairavī*, *Tripura Balā*, and *Tripurā Sundari*.[2] The *Purāṇa* devotes several sections to the exposition of rites and ceremonies connected with the worship of the goddess *Tripurā* in her different manifestations. These discriptions differ largely from those in the *Tripurā Rahasya*.[3]

The *Bhairavi* form is one of the dominant manifestations of the goddess. She is to be worshipped in this form in the left hand ways.[4] Whatever is red is dearer to *Tripurā Bhairavī*. Spirituous liquors, red flower, red clothing and vermillion please her the most.[5]

*Kāmākhyā*

She is the presiding deity of the *Kāmarūpa* as well as of the *Kālikā Purāṇa*. Though we find her name throughout the work, but in the latter half of the *Purāṇa* it is more common. When *Mahāmāyā* went to enjoy with *Śiva* at *Kāmarūpa* she was named as *Kāmākhyā*.[6] She resides on the *Nīla Kūṭa* mountain,[7] where the *Śiva* resides. She is called by the names of *Kāmākhyā*, *Tripurā*, *Kāmeśwarī*, *Kāmarūpā*, and *Yoni-maṇḍala*.[8] She is having five forms, and similarly five forms of Śiva are also mentioned.[9] She is having fair colour, decked with ornaments, young age and is a lady of beauty.[10] Her *Mantra* is named as *Kāma-Gāyatrī*.[11]

1. Kālikā P. chs. 66-67.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
   Tripurā Rahasya, p. 2.26-32.
4. Kālikā P. 74.124.
5. Ibid. 75.66.
6. Ibid. 60.40-59.
7. Ibid. 64.I-6; 49-63; 76.36-40; 82.75-63.
8. Ibid. 64.78-79.
9. Ibid. 65.3.
10. Ibid. 65.9-15.
11. Ibid. 66.22.

It is said thet one should go to *Yoni-piṭha* of *Kāmākhyā* and he will be relieved of the world.[1] The goddess is said as the Mother of the world and the creator of the universe.

*The Virgin Goddess, Tripurā:—*

A considerable section of the *Kālikā-Purāṇa* has been devoted to the worship of the goddess *Tripurā*, a virgin goddess of beauty and sex, identified with *Pārvatī* and *Kāmākhyā*. The cult of the virgin worship (*Kanyā-Pūjan*) and of the sensual aspects of the Devi-worship seems to be derived from the cult of *Tripurā* recorded in the *Tripurā Rahasya*.[2] It is said in the *Yogini Tantra*,[3] that a *Śākta* devotee is to be enjoined to contem plate the mental image of a girl of sixteen, shinning like the newly rising sun. He has to become identical with *Tripurā Sundarī* and to think himself as a Devi or a woman.[4]

The *Tripurā Rahasya* furnishes certain details about the emergence of this goddess. She is the primordial Energy embodied as *Mahādevī* (the great goddess). The whole world, static and moving is her sport.[5] This Energy is to be contemplated as woman,[6] because the female form is considered both beautiful and pleasure giving, the very nature of consciousness and intelligence. So she is contemplated as a pleasing instrument of spiriritual success.[7] The female figure manifested herself first as a virgin goddess and then she divided herself in several forms.

The goddess was called a virgin (*Kumārī*), because she was her own mistress and by virtue of her own independent status created the universe according to her desire.[8] Here by

1. Kālikā P. 76 87-90; chap.er 76 is simply the glorification of the goddess Kāmākhyā.
2. Ibid. chs.—66.67.
   Tripurā Rahasya (Mahātmya Khaṇḍa), The Kāshi Sanskrit Series. ed. by Pandit Mukunda Lal Shastri.
3. Yogini Tantra. I.6.17.
4. Bhandarkar, Vaishnavism, Śaivism and other religions, p. 146.
5. Tripurā Rahasya. 57.66.
9. Ibid. 59.3.
7. Ibid.
8. Kālikā Purāṇa 19.41.

virgin we do not mean the present meaning of chaste, unspotted girl, but it means unwed, unmarried, and thus free from any body's control. The virgin Ishtar is frequently addressed as the prostitute. The sacred prostitutes in her temples were also called 'the holy virgins.[1] (Deva Dāsis).

This beautiful goddess presiding over the circle of femi nine triangles has been super-imposed upon, in her own complete self. In the *Kālikā Purāṇa* the *Tripurā* goddess is adored in three aspects as *Tripurā Bālā*, *Tripurā Sundarī*, and *Tripurā Bhairavī*.[2] *Tripurā Sundarī* has three poses and of these three, the middle pose is the focus of concentration. The form is that of a fair lady with all good bodily signs, and adorned with varied ornaments. She is of the splendour of the rising sun, full of freshness of the youth; seated on a counch of lotus flowers, with fully developed breasts, bejewelled with threefold wrinkles of flesh round the belly, slightly intoxicated with drink, pleasing to the eye and causing heavy undulations of passions in the world.[3] In the first and third poses she is depicted as naked.[4] *Tripura-Bālā* carries a flowery arrows and a noose.[5] *Tripurā Bhairavī* is red in colour and dressed in red garments. She is dazzling like a thousand suns with eyes rolling with intoxication of drink.[6] *Tripurabālā* may be worshipped according to the right hand or left hand rites, but *Tripurā-Bhairavī* must be worshipped according to the left-hand method.[7] *Bhairavī* is the most dominating manifestation.[8]

This goddess has created nine *Śaktis* called *Kāmeśwari*, *Bhagamālinī* (bearing a garland of sex-organs), *Nitya Klinnā* (always moist), *Bhruṇatā* (pregnant) etc. and also nine yoginis.[9] The goddess herself dwells in the centre of nine triangles

1. Briffault : Mothers, Vol. III, p. 169-70.
2. Kalikā Purāṇa 78.86.
3. Ibid. 67.55.
4. Ibid. 68.89; 62.66.
5. Ibid. 78.100.
6. Ibid. 78.93.
7. Ibid. 78.125.
8. Ibid. 78.87.
9. Ibid. 56.7.

placed within one another, the whole being encompassed by one circle. This is called *Śrī Cakra*, situated within this circle she is called *Mahā-Tripurā Sundarī*.[1] She divides herself into nine parts and presides over all the triangles, her several names being *Tripurā*, *Tripureśī*, *Tripura-Sundarī*, *Tripuravāsinī*, *Tripurā Śrī*, *Tripurā Mālinī*, *Tripurā Sīddhā*, *Tripurāmbikā* and *Mahā-Tripurā Sundarī*.[2] Whosoever erects a *Śrīcakra* is entitled to get endless bliss.[3]

She dwells in her own real self in three places;[4] *Kāma Giri* (*Kāmākhyā* hills); *Jullundhar* and *Ourangiri* near the sea There are twelve manifestations of *Levī* dweling in twelve places.[5]

1. Kāmākṣī in Kanchipura;
2. Kumārī (the virgin) in Kerala;
3. Sundarī (the beautiful) in Banga;
4. Guhyakeśwārī (the lady of the Guhyakas) in Nepal;
5. Bhrāmarī in Malaya;
6. Ambā in Anarta countary;
7. Mahālakshmī in Karavila;
8. Kālikā in Malaya;
9. Lalitā in Prayāga;
10. Vindhyavāsinī in the Vindhya hills;
11. Viśālakshī in Benaras;
12. Mangalvatī in Gayā.

*the Naraka episode.*

By the study of the *Naraka* episode,[6] D.R. Mankad suggests that the whole story points out towards the ancient chronological history of Assam,[7] which is still to be traced. Main features are as follows :—

1. *Naraka* was the adopted son of *Janaka*, king of *Mithilā*

1. Kālikā P. 56.7.
2. Ibid. 57.56.
3, Ibid. 80.15.
4. Ibid. 18.42-43.
5. Ibid
6, Ibid. chs. 37-41.
7. Mankad (D.R.), Purāṇic Chronology, p. 225,

and *Bhūmi*, a foster mother, possibly the follower of the *Śākta* religion.[1]

2. *Naraka* was a title of a dynasty just like *Janaka*, both meaning the same (नर+क; जन+क) and according to the book called *Hara Gauri Samvāda*, twenty four or twenty five kings in *Naraka* dynasty have ruled over Assam (*Kāmarūpa*).[2]
3. The first king in the *Kālikā Purāṇā* is called *Naraka* while it is the last king of the dynasty who is called *Narakāsura*, a man like *asura* but not belonging to asura dynasty.[3]
4. *Naraka* defeated the *Kirāt* king of *Kāmarūpa* and founded the rule of his dynasty there. It seems that as the Assam was habitated by the *Kirātas* etc. the cult of *Śakti* was prevalent there, which he followed to strenthen his position in the state, but at the same time he modified it by bringing the Brahmins, well-versed in the Vedas, from other states, and he was suceessful in his mission.[4]
5. The king *Naraka* established *Śaktism* in *Kāmarūpa* country and constructed a temple of *Kāmākhyā* on the top of *Nilāchal*. He was a devout follower of *Śakti* Cult.[5]
6. The last king of the dynasty called as *Narakāsura* began to disrespect Devi and introduced all sinful acts in the state with the advice of the king *Banāsurā*, a worshipper of *Śiva*. He had also collected and imprisoned 16,000 beautiful girls.[6]
7. Kṛṣna on the request of the gods killed this *Narakāsura* and freed all those girls, and he installed *Bhagadutta*, the son or grandson of *Narakāsura* on throne.[7]

1. Mankad (D.R.), Purāṇic Chronology, p. 226; Kālikā P. 37.35-52.
2. Ibid. p, 228.
3. Ibid, p. 229.
   Kālikā P, 39.16.60, 167; 40.1. (for Naraka) 41.11; 49 (for Anarakasura).
4. Ibid. p. 229.
   Kālikā P. 39.101-125. 152-53.
5. Ibid. p. 230.
   Kālikā P. 3 ).153; 167.
6. Ibid. p. 227; 231.
   Kālikā. P. 40,2-18; 78; 41.32-35.
7. Mankad (D.R.), Purāṇic Chronology, p. 227; 231.
   Kālikā P. 51.80-110.

The study of the *Naraka* episode in the *Kālikā-purāṇa* goes to point out that prevalent *Śakti* cult was of two types viz;

1. *Śakti*-cult was supported by Vaisnavism, as we see in the beginning of the *Purāṇa* that *Naraka* was offered a boon by *Viṣṇu* himself, rather he is called the son of *Viṣṇu.*[1]

This cult of *Śakti* sponsered by *Viṣṇu*, was of puritan style constituting the simple worship of the goddess wiih vegetarian offerings. It was free from all *Tantric* miscrepancies like offering of meat, wine, *Bhairavī Cakra* and *Mudrā* etc.[2]

2. Cult of *Śakti* influenced by *Śaivism*, as we see that as soon as *Narakāsura* the last king came in contact of *Śaivism* through *Bānāsura*, is stated to commit all sinful acts. This indicates that the cult sponsored by *Śiva* was non-vegatarian cult with the constituents of offering of *Bali*, commencements of Bhairavi-*Cakra*, *Mudrā*, *Yantras* and permiting to lead non-ethical life.[3] In the end the king *Narakāsur* was killed by *Kṛṣṇa* to lighten the burden of the earth.

Thus we see a direct tussel between *Vaiṣṇavism* and *Śaivism* to influence the cult of *Śakti*. Originally, in this *Purāṇa* *Vaiṣṇavism* was overpowering the cult while in the later period it was Śaivism which influenced it so much so that in the end *Śaktism* was considered as part of *Śaivism.*[4]

*Kāmarūpa:—*

What followed immediately the Naraka's death and disappearance of the symbol of the goddess Kāmākhyā is not mentioned in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, but the *Yoginī Tantra*, which takes a very lenient view of *Naraka's* conduct towards *Vaśiṣṭha*, states that goddess *Kāmākhyā* was to suffer an eclipse for three hundered years of the *Kālī* era. There will be great sufferings of the people and none but a succession of tribal kings, the *Yavanas*, the *Kuvacas*, the *Saumāras* and the *Plavas* will rule over the country.[5]

1. Kāiikā P. 37.35-52.
2. Ibid. 39.153; 167.
3. Ibid. 60.2-I8; 7S; 41.32-35.
4. Kakati (B.K.) The Mother goddess Kāmākhyā, p. 18.
5. Yogini Tantra.
   Kakati (B.K.) The Mother godddss Kāmākhyā, p. 18.

Once *Kāmarūpa* became such a sacred place that all the people living there became entitled, by virtve of their residence in *Kāmārūpa*, to go to heaven after death. *Yama* felt greatly at this loss of control and lodged a ccmplaint with *Brahmā* and subsequently the matter was reported to *Viṣṇu* as well as to *Śiva* who in return promised to help *Yama*. *Śiva* ordered the hosts and goddess *Ugra Tārā* to drive out all the twice-born people from Assam. Goddess *Ugra Tārā* and *Aparājitā* expelled all the *Dvijas* and the people of the four-orders. *Vaśiṣṭha* who was practising penances to *Śiva* on the *Sandhyāchala* hill and who was forced to go out by the goddess *Ugra tārā*, pronounced a terrible curse on *Ugra tārā*, the hosts and *Śiva* himself. He said, "you being a woman (*Vāmā*) are expelling me, so you will henceforth be worshipped only according to *Vāmā* rites. Your hosts roving aboutlike *Mlechhas* will henceforth be degraded to the rank of *Mlechhas*, and *Śiva* will receive only the worship by the *Mlechhas*, being always covered over with ashes and carrying bones. This land of *Kāmarūpa* will be ruled over by *Mlechhas* and at the advent of *Viṣṇu* all the scriptures, will be rarities"[1] The curse of the saint had immediate effect and *Kāmarūpa* became shorn of *Vedic* rites, as the four orders of the people were driven out.[2]

Śaivism in some gross form associated with wine and flesh was the prevailing religion of the aboriginal *Kirāṭas*. The Aryanisad conquerors held this religion in disdain and placed it under a ban. At the same time to secure easy recognition by aboriginal people they brought to prominance another local-cult, the cult of the Mother goddess worshipped in the *Yoni* symbol as opposed to the cult of *Śiva* worshipped in the phallic symbol. This mother cult of *Kamākhyā* must have belonged to certain matriarchal tribes like the Khasis and the Garos. To win over their allegiance and support and to facilitate the propagation of *Āryan* ideas and customs, royal patronage was extended to this local cult of *Kāmākhyā*. The Mother Goddess in *Kāmarūpa* could very easily be brought into alignment with other forms of the Mother goddess like *Durgā*,

1. Kālikā P. ch. 85.
2. Kakati (B.K.), The Mother goddess Kāmākhyā, p. 18-19.

*Kālī* etc. which had already been recognised and adored in the *Mahābhārata* and in the early *Purāṇas*. The *Saivas* scented a danger in this suppression of their own cult and the escaltations of a rival cult. They secretly hatched a conspiracy not simply against the rival cult but against the prime instigators, i.e. the Vaiṣṅavite teachers and the Aryan twice-born. The king *Naraka* was won over from the Aryan ways and the symbol of the goddess *Kāmakhyā* was stolen, then *Naraka* was destroyed by his former supporters.[1]

*Durgā* with her varied names had already established herself as a mighty goddess in the Paurāṇic Pantheon. In the *Harivaṁśa* she is also called *Nārāyaṇa—Priyā* (beloved of *Nārāyaṇa*) and *Vāsudevabhaginī* (sister of *Vāsudeva*, *Kṛṣṇa*). These epithets show her early association with *Viśṇu* and the Vaishnavite-cult. Commenting on this passage of the *Harivaṁśa*, Muir says—"The object of this passage seems to be to take *Durgā* and her worship under the protection and patronage of Viṣṇu.[2] This will explain why the worship of *Kāmākhyā* was encouraged and patronised by *Viṣṇu*, *Kāmākhyā* being by his side against *Naraka*. In the early stages of her evolution, *Durgā* with her other manifestations had nothing to do with *Śiva*. Muir says "It appears as if some contest had at one time existed between the votaries of *Mahādeva* and those of other deities and *Dakṣa Yajña* may be treated as the best example.[3]

Perhaps the temple of *Kāmākhyā*, on the west of Gauhati, was associated with *Tantrik* Hinduism. The shrine represents the *Yonī*, and is associated with the pre-*Āryan* king *Naraka*, who used to be the guardian of the shrine. According to the *Kālikā Purāṇa* the genital organ of *Satī* fell here on the *Nīlāchala* hillock. She is called Kāmākhyā because she came there secretly to satisfy her amour (*Kāma*) with Śiva. Later religious history of Assam centres round this goddess; and other godesses are recognised as her varied manifestations.[4] The cult of virgin

1. Kakati (B.K.), The Mother goddess Kāmākhyā, p. 16.
2. J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Text, Vol. IV. 1864, p. 370, 160. 311-312.
3. Kakati (B.K.) The Mother goddess Kāmākhyā, p. 17.
4. Barua (B.K.). A Cultural history of Āssam. Vol. I, p. 147-149.
   Barua (K.L.) Early History of Kāmarūpa p. 14.

worship, and of the sexual aspect of the *Śakti*-worship seems to be derived from the cult of *Tripurā*, a virgin goddess of beauty and sex.[1]

The *Kālikā Purāṇa* is very important from the point of view of the history of *Śaktism*. It records so many stories to show the prevalence of the *Śakti*-cult. First time we find here the story about the origin or creation of the *Śakti Pīṭhas*. It is the only work in whole of the Puranic range which gives in detail the description as well as the prescription of *Paśu Bali* to the goddess. It also suggests the performance of *Mudras*, especially the *Yonī-mudrā*, very dear to the goddess. There are long dissertations on the topic of 16 *Upachāras* offered to *Devī*. In short the *Purāṇa* represents the ritualistic side of the *Śakti*-cult which was very popular in those days.

*Śakti in the Mahā-bhāgavata Purāṇa*:—

It is an interesting *Upa-purāṇa* dealing with the praise of Devi and her worship. The *Purāṇa* opens with the *Ślokas* saying *Devī* as *Ādyā Prakṛti* and *Parā* and *Swarga-Apavarga-Pradā*; she created the universe of her own accord, subjected herself to births, and had *Siva* as her husband.[2] In this *Purāṇa* the goddess is also called as '*Tāraka Brahman*,[3] which in its form of *Durgā* stays at mountain Mandara.[4]

The *Purāṇa* advocates *Śaktism*. According to this *Purāṇa*, it is *Kālī* who is *Param Brahman* as well as *Parā Prakṛti* (or *Mūla Prakṛti*). Unlike the *Kālikā Purāṇa* and the *Bṛhad-dharma-Purāṇa*, it conceives *Kāli* as the wife and *Śakti* of *Śiva*.[5] It identifies *Śiva* with *Puruṣa* and says that *Brahman* consists of *Śiva* and *Śakti*.[6] Though *Sachidānanda-Vigrahā*, *Śuddha-Jñāna-mayī* and *Arūpā*, *Kāli* as *Prakṛtī*, assumed for the sake of creation, the from of a young and beautiful lady seated on a lion and

1. Kakati (B K.) The Mother Goddess Kāmākhyā, p. 35-36.
2. Mahā-bhāgavata, I.1-4.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. 15.16.
6. Ibid. 18.14.

having a dark complexion, four hands, red eyes, dishevelled hair, and the quarters as her clothes (*Digambarā*)[1]. She created a *Puruṣa* as an embodiment of the three Gunas and contaminated into him a wish for creation. From the three *Guṇas*, (viz. *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*), of this *Puruṣa* were born *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Śiva* respectively. *Prakṛti* on her part, divided herself into *Māyā*, *Vidyā* and *Paramā* and became *Satī*, *Gangā*, *Durgā*, *Sāvitrī*, *Lakśmī*, *Sarasvatī* and others.[2]

Devī is said having a Divine from.[3] She is (*Sūkshma*) subtle nature and first born in the world.[4] Devī herself while revealing her nature to *Himālaya* says that 'I am ultimate power, mother of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśa*, creator of the world, protector and destroyer also.[5] She is told to be *Brahman* of the *Vedanṭa*, comprised of bliss eternal, (*Nityānandmayī*) eternity incarnate, knowledge and bliss in bodily form.[6] She is always considered to be the mother of the world, individual and of the deities or devotees, last of all is full of campassion.[7]

In *Devīgītā* she is all in the world[8] ranking with Brahman. Here in the *Mahābhāgavata* she is said to be having all the *Vibhūtis*[9] as it is said in the *Gītā* about *Kṛ.ṇa*.[10] According to this *Purāṇa Śiva* and *Śakti* are not different. Both are but one, named as *Brahman*.[11] She is comprised of all the sacrifices (*Yajña*).[12] We can note here that *Bhakti*, just like *Vaiṣṇavism*, is the main tenate of *Śaktism* in this *Purāṇa*. *Bhaguvatī Gītā* of *Mahābhāgavatā Purāṇa* especially is a discourse on *Bhaktiyoga*, but the deity is said to be *Parāśakti*.[13]

1. Mahābhāgavata. 15.17.
2. Ibid 18.14. also Brahma Vaivarta P. II.1.1-20.
3. Ibid. 15.9.
4. Ibid. 15.16.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. 15.17-20.
7. Ibid. 15.50-51.
8. Ibid. 15.37-39.
9. Ibid. 18.3-8.
10. Gītā 10.1-32.
11. Māhābhāgavata 18.14.
12. Ibid. 18.36.
13. Ibid. 18.1-43.

*Śakti* and the power is said to be the great deluge of the world as well as she is the conciousness or knowledge incarnate.[1] 'You are the last resort for the poor devotees suffering from worldly bondage and miseries[2]. Devī in her all the forms is considered to be the remover of poverty, she protects from all types of fears and punishes the wicked persons[3], so that the gentle fellows may enjoy the world and attain the salvation.

Besides these philosophical speculations on Devī, the *Purāṇa* is very important for the cult of *Śakti* as it tries to show the relation of *Śaktism* with all the important personalities of Indian History, events and the great books named as epics. Though in the other *Purāṇas* also we find that *Rāma* worshipped *Durgā* and then killed *Rāvana* with her help, but the readers will be astonished to study in the *Mahabhāgavata*, that *Kṛṣṇa* also was an incarnarion of *Devī*. *Śiva* once requested *Devī* to be the husband and himself to be the wife, and this desire, as *Purāṇa-kāra* says, was fulfilled by the goddess in *Kṛṣṇ avātara*. She was herself born as *Kṛṣṇa* from *Devakī* and *Vāsudeva*, while *Śiva* was born as *Rādhā*, being the beloved of *Śrīkṛṣṇa*.

In this *Purāṇa* the *Rāma* episode,[4] the *Kṛṣṇa* episode,[5] and the Pandavas battle against *Kauravas*[6] and *Indra-Vṛtra*[7] episode, all the main and important events of *Purāṇik* *M*ythology are related with the cult of *Śakti*. Thus the au thor tried to show the harmony between the *Śakti* or *Durgā*, with other sects of Hinduism viz. *Vaiṣṇavism* pertaining to both i. e. the *Rāma* and *Śrīkṛṣṇa* as well as Śaivism.[8]

1. Mahābhārata P. 56.72-73.
2. Ibid. 56.75.
3. Ibid. 56.71.
4. Ibid. chs. 37-48 only.
5. Ibid. chs. 50-54 only.
6. Ibid. chs. 55-58 only.
7. Ibid· chs. 60-63 only.
8. Ibid. 88.120-121.

*Pāṇḍavas as devotees of Kālī*:—

They are said to be the devout devotees of *Devī*[1] while Draupadi is said to be the partial incarnation of Devi[2], on whose insult the goddess was enraged and managed to kill the demons in the guise of the *Kauravas*. While going to *Matsya Desha*[3] they praised Her and in battlefield[4] they invoked Her. At every time of difficulty they tried to remember Her either in the form of *Kṛṣṇa* or in her *Kālī* form. While going to the forest they went to *Yonipeetha*[6], worshipped the goddess and asked her for kingdom, the Goddess was all the time by their side and protected them from every danger and made them to be successful in the great world war called *Mahābhārata*.

*Incarnation of Devī as Śrīkṛṣṇa* :—

Once upon a time *Śiva* sitting on *Kailāsa* requested *Devī* to fulfil his only desire. The desire was that *Śiva* wanted himself to see in a woman form.[7] She agreed to it and p o-mised to descend on earth in the form of *Śrīkṛṣṇa*[8] to serve the following purpose :

1. To enjoy with *Śiva* who incarnated in the form of *Rādhā*.[9]

2. To destroy the bad kings,[10] i.e. the incarnations of *Rākṣasas* killed by *Viṣṇu*, as she was requested by the Earth as well as by *Brahmā* to remove the burden from earth.

She counselled with *Viṣṇu* divided Herself in two[11] :

1. A girl (later on *Vindhya-vāsinī*) born of Yaśodā.

2. *Śrīkṛṣṇa*[12] was born of *Devākī* and was exchanged for some time to *Nanda's* child.

1. Mahābhāgavata P. 49.58-59.
2. Ibid. 49.50; 55.58; 52.28.
3. Ibid. 56.36; 40-45-70-7S.
4. Ibid. 57.12-24.
5. Ibid. 56.1-30.
6. Ibid. 57.24.
7. Ibid. 49.15-30.
8. Ibid. 49.18-30.
9. Ibid. 49.41.
10. Ibid. 49.29-50.
11. Ibid. 50.1; 61.
12. Ibid. chs. 49-58.

She was born as *Śrīkṛṣṇa* and made *Devakī* to know Her real form i.e. *Kālī*.[1] She as *Śrīkṛṣṇa* managed to kill *Pūtanā*, *Bakāsura*, *Aghasura*,[2] *Kaṅsa* and released his parents from *Kaṅsa's* prison. She enjoyed with *Rādhā in Rāsalīlā* (that means whole of the life of *Śrīkṛṣṇa* is being depicted, identifying him Kali).[3] Finally He helped the *Pāṇḍavas* to win the *Mahābhārata* was and destroyed and *Kaurvas*. A new thing is there that *Pāṇḍavas* went to *Svarga* alongwith *Śrīkṛṣṇa*,[4] as they did not want to live in the world without *Kṛṣṇa* (without Her grace). In this way *Kṛṣṇa* is shown to be the *Kālī* and *Kālī* to be the *Kṛṣṇa*; i.e. both the deities and sects are shown as one.[5]

*The Rāma Episode* :—

The *Purāṇa* says that Rāvana was a devout devotee of the goddess and there was a temple of *Devī* in Laṅka where he used to worship her daily. Being valorous due to her grace, he was invincible even by the gods.[6] Then Rama came on the earth, to destroy the Rāvaṇa, as he was turned to be a wicked person Rāma also in his early childhood was initiated to *Devī Mantra*.[7] When Sītā, a manifestation of Devi, was taken away by Rāvana in Laṅkā, it was an incident which infuriated the goddess against him and she promised her full co-operation to Rāma against Rāvaṇa.[8] Rāma reaching Laṅkā, her, and afterwards also with the advice of *Brahmā*, celebrated her worship. This ceremony was called *Akāla Bodhana*, meaning untimely worship, and thus was originated the worship of Devī in the *Śarad Navarātra*. The Goddess appeared and offered a boon to Rāma that he will be able to kill Rāvaṇa.[9] Then in the four chapters, Devī and her abode as well her

1. Mahābhāgavata P. 51.18; 32; 53.14; 55.1.40; 49.28.
2. Ibid. 51.16; 24.
3. Ibid. chs. 49-54; 52.10-12.
4. Ibid. 58.1-53: 57.23.
5. Ibid. 51.18; 32; 53.14; 55.1; 58.49-52.
6. Ibid. 38.1-55.
7. Ibid. 38.1-55.
8. Ibid. chs. 39-40-41.
9. Ibid. ch. 44.1-31.

worship is described. Ultimately the Rāma was victorious over Rāvana and was very much greatful to *Śakti* or goddess by whose grace he succeeded in this extra-ordinary object, which earned him fame, kingdom and Sitā.[1] In this way it depicts the over-powering influence of Śaktism over Rāma, a *Vaiṣṇava* deity.

*Indra and Brahmahatyā*:—

*Indra* when defeated by *Vṛtra*, went to *Dadhichi*, a seer, and asked him to help in the destruction of *Vṛtra*. *Dadhichi* after a long consideration left his body by *Yagāgni* so that the weapon may be made of his bones to kill *Vṛtra*.[2] Indra having done so ultimately a killed his enemy and regained his kingdom. But as *Dadhichi* was destroyed, the *Brahma Hatyā* came to *Indra*. As and he wanted to remove it off he first of all went to *Gautama* to seek the means. *Gautama* told him have a look of *Mahākālī*,[3] and he will be cleansed of *Brahma Hatyā*. But she was only to be seen by *Tapas* of many years, not possible for *Indra*, so he said that *Indra* should go to Her *Aboda*, about which he knew notting. *Gautama* directed him to *Brahmā*, *Brahmā* to *Viṣṇu* and *Viṣṇu* to *Śiva* to know Her *Loka*. *Śiva*, who has seen it by virtue of penance, went to *Kāli's Loka* along with *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Indra*. While going there they save so many *Brahmās*, *Viṣnus* and universes and the luxury displayed there, they have forgot their aim and were absorbed in seeing that. Once some maid servant of *Devī* came to ask them and she reminded them of their main object.[4] Then they went to *Devī's* residence and through *Ganapatī* sent a message to Devi, who sent him back to ask from which universe they are coming, as there were so many *Brahmāṇḍas* and *Devas*. But they were unable to answer. Anyhow Devī called them inside all except *Indra*. After few minutes *Kālī* became *Antarhitā*[5] and it was after the *Stūti* (eulogy) by *Brahmā*, and *Śiva* that she appeared again to bless

1. Mahābhāgavata P. 41.1-24.
2. Ibid. 60.1-32.
3. Ibid. 61.1-65.
4. Ibid. 62.1-27.
5. Ibid. 63.1-20.

them. *Śiva* then asked for the entry of *Indra* into her palace. She said that his sins are removed by coming to my *loka* and the rest will be removed by touching the dust of my residence and permitted his entry. At last *Indra* came there and was very much pleased seeing the goddess *Kālī*.[1]

*Kālisthāna Varnanam*:—

The *Mahādeva* has described *Kālī's* residence[2] to *Nārada*. The city is on all sides surrounded by the ocean of sweet water and is protected by the *Bhairavas*. The city is consisted of so many valuable jewels and gems. There is a wall around the city having four gates in the four directions. In the middle of the city there is a palace made of jewels and of gold. There is a throne placed on the shoulders of so many lions and goddess is stting on.[3] She has got 64 maid servants called *Yoginīs*, who perform all the duties pertaining to this city. Devī is enjoying with *Sadāśiva*. The palace is well-protected by the *Bhairavas*. and so many *Brahmās*, *Viṣṇus* and other gods are waiting for her looks.

In the north there is a *Pārijāta Vana*,[4] beautiful with blosomed flowers, and singing sounds of birds. In the east there is a tank, beautiful with golden lotuses, birds and bees as well as with the flowers of *Champaka*, and *Ashoka*. Its banks and steps are made of costly jewels. In the south *Sadā Śiva* lives in various forms and manifestations and Devi enjoys with him.[5]

*Kāmarūpa Māhātmyam* :—

After the death of *Satī*, his wife, *Śiva* was suffering from the pangs of separation. At that time all the gods headed by *Viṣṇu* and *Brahmā* appeared there at *Kāmarūpa* where *Śiva* was staying those days. Having come to know about his pitiable condition due to the separation from his wife *Satī* and *Śiva*'

1. Mahābhāgavata 59. 63.28-33.
2. Ibid. 1-32.
3. Ibid. 59.11-13.
4. Ibid. 59.26-30.
5. Ibid 59,32.

earnest desire to see or to procure her (*Satī* or *Prakṛti*) again as his wife, *Brahmā* and *Viṣṇu* both advised him to perform penances at *Kāmarūpa*.[1] *Śiva* acted according to their advice and was successful to have a look of the goddess. He asked Her to be born again as his wife, and she also promised to be born in the *Himālayas*,[2] as daughter of *Himālaya* and *Menakā*, and to be married to *Śiva*. After some time *Gangā* was born first and was devoted to *Śiva*, and later on *Durgā* was born and married to Siva.[3]

Ultimately *Śiva* was successful to have *Satī* again as his wife, by performing penance in the Kāmarūpa.[4] Similarly if anyone else performs *Tapa* at *Kāmarūpa*, will always be successful in his mission. It is a Mahapeeth and Mukti is given to everybody who leaves his body here.[5] At *Kāmarūpa* there is Yoni-symbol representing the goddess[6] and is considered the best place for pilgrimage in the world as the ten *Mahāvidyās* also stay here. One should go there and worship the goddess with devotion to attain both wordly enjoyments and final salvation.

*Bhagavatī Gītā*:

It is a part of Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa[7] and deals with the philosophy of *Śakti* cult. Devi herself taught it to *Himālaya*, her father. She revealed herself before her father by disclosing that she is none except Brahman i.e. Final authority and enjoying everbliss. *Śakti* is associated with *Śiva* and is all knowing.[8] Seeing her *Virātswaroopa*, a fearful form, Himavān was frightened and requested for a charming appearance of the goddess[9] and then saw her beautiful form. She preaches the cult of *Bhakti*, the only and the best solution for the attainment of salvation.[10] Here it can be compared with

1. Mahābhāgavata Chs. 12; 76-78.
2. Ibid. 12.11; 29 31.
3. Ibid. 12,42-43.
4. Ibid. 12.29-31; 76.35-36.
5. Ibid. 12 35-49;56.2.
6. Ibid. 76.19-20; 71.22-29.
7. Ibid. Chs. 15-19.
8. Ibid. 15.16-19.
9. Ibid. 15.22-35.
10. Ibid. 15.60-72.

Bhagavadgītā, where Ātman is said to be of the nature of Cit (conciousness) and pure and free from birth and death. Ātman is one only,[1] and resides in all the bodies. Devi Gītā praises the *Jñāna*, and also describes in detail the science of embryology.[2] Devi says here that all this world and the so-called enjoyments are not true like a dream. One should be wholeheartedly devoted to the goddess, to be freed from worldly bondage.[3] She as *Śakti* is pervaded in everyone and from time to time she helps them in wining the war between good and bad.[4] Here we can see that the author has borrowed the ideas and the words, even the verses from the Bhagavadgītā.[5]

The *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa* also identifies *Durgā* or *Parā Śaktī* with *Brahman*.[6] She is present in whole of the world in the form of all gods. She is having the *Sacchidānnda* form[7] and is known only by the *Vedas*. She is the progenitor of the worlds and the beings and She makes the world to be illuminated by her own lustre.[8] She is *cit Śakti*, *Spanda Śakti* and *Māyā*.[9] She is the only authority to give salvation to all the beings and is the presiding deity of the *Mantras*.[10] Though called *Mūla Prakṛti* she is identified with Brahman and is the instigation of all the agencies of creation, preservation and destruction of the world. She may be called in this form as Jagdambā, the world Mother.[11] The author throughout the text calls her as *Pūrṇa Prakṛti*, who divided herself in five modifications, viz. Gangā, Savitrī, Durgā, Lakshmī, and Saraswatī.[12] Even Śiva himself surrenders before her by saying

1. Mahābhāgavata P. 16.3-6, 14.
2. Ibid. 17. 1-31.
3. Ibid. 17.32-51; 18.12; 31.
4. Ibid. 18,17-20.
5. For example see the verses 18.38-40; 43 with Gīta verses 9.29, 30, 27. and 18.65.
6. Ibid. I.29; 35; 46; 2.17; 5.18; 11.3; 21-26.
7. Ibid. I,31. 40-41; 3.13-14.
8. Ibid. I.25-27.
9. Ibid. I.34; 5.27; 43.39-40.
10. Ibid. 2.17-19.
11. Ibid. 3.1-4: 26-31.
12. Ibid. 3.26; 5.1.

that she is an independent sovereign power,[1] with nobody to check her. She in the form of Mohinī, attracts everyone, including *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu*. Her name is *Mahākālī*[2] and Her abode is called *Paramapada*, given to her devotees only.[3]

In the *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Śakti* first of all, as *Sati*, is the wife of *Śiva*.[4] To destroy the sacrifice of *Dakṣa*, she became *Kālī*[5] and burnt herself in the sacrificial fire, and in the next birth she was called Uma, Girijā, Pārvatī[6], as the daughter of Himvān and Menakā. She is the wife of *Śiva* and his permanant associate in the form of *Ardha-nārīswara*.[6] At the time of creation she is *Prakṛti*, while in the *Pralaya* period and as a controllor of the world, she is *Brahman*.[8] As an independent goddess, she is called *Durgā*. the manifestation of her *Brahman* aspect.[9] When she killed the demons, *Caṇḍa*. *Muṇḍa*, *Śumbha*, *Niśumbha*, and *Raktabīja* etc., she is called *Kātyāyanī*[10] and *Ambikā*. In *Dvāpara* age to destroy the demons and to help the *Pāṇḍavas*, Devī incarnated herself as *Kṛṣṇa*.[11] As the fulfiller of the desires of her devotees she is called *Kāmeśwari*, the presiding deity of *Kāmarūpa*, also known as *Kāmākhyā*.[12] The *Purāṇa* deals mainly the three manifestations of *Devī*, first as daughter of *Daksha*, *Satī*; second as wife of *Śiva—Girijā*, *Umā*, and *Pārvatī*; and third as *Kṛṣṇa* and last of all identifies all these, with *Para Śakti* or *Para Brahman*, whose grace is enjoyed by the beings all over the universe.

1. Mahābhāgata P. 8 89-90.
2. Ibid. 20.34-36.
3. Ibid. 48.21-22.
4. Ibid. 3.7-8; 4.24-27.
5. Ibid. 8.46-53; 101-106; 8.22-13; 33-37; 77-80; 56.23.
6. Ibid. 22.57-58.
7. Ibid. 29.14; 81;10.
8. Ibid. 43.30-39.
9. Ibid. 1-40-55; 2.5-5; 43.41-45.
10. Ibid. 44.9-16; 52.10.
11. Ibid. 55.1.
12. Ibid. 56.17-26; 76.15-19.

## CHAPTER IV

## A REVIEW OF THE TĀNTRIC ŚAKTI-CULT

***The Tantras*** :

The word *Tantra* is derived from the root *Tan* meaning to draw out, or to spread.[1] The significance is clearly brought out by the words like *Tantu*; what is spun out like a thread, a strand, and (*Tana*) the body, in which the spirit has spread out or revealed itself. *Tantra* stands for ritual in general, the art of religion, to which every religion of the world, ancient and modern is associated with one form or other. We can say that ritualism has been the body (*Tanu*) in which the spirit of religion has most commonly manifested. As there is no smoke without fire, it would be in order to say that there is no ritual without religion, and wherever there is ritual, there is *Tantra*.

The Balanced Indian opinion through the ages has always given a high place to *Tantra*. The word *Āgama*, which stands indifferently for the *Veda* and the *Tantra*,[2] has been adopted by common consent for indicating authoritative tradition. *Kullūka Bhaṭṭa*, the celebrated commentator on *Manusmṛti* does not step outside the pale of orthodoxy when he asserts that *Śruti* is two-fold, *Vaidika* and *Tāntrika*.[3] Lord *Śrikṛṣṇa* in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* speaks that religious practice or *Ācāra* is of three kinds, *Vaidika*, *Tāntrika* and *Miśra* (composite).[4] The

1. Woodroffe-John, Shakti and Shata, p. 50.
   Kāsikā Vṛtti (7.2.9).
   Shukla (DN) Pratima Vijmana p. 113.
   Dasgupta, S.N. Philosophical Essays, p. 151.
2. Sastri H.P.—A Catalogue of Palm leaf and Selected Paper Mss. Durbar Library, Nepal, Vol. II, p. 69.
3. Kulluka Bhaṭṭa's commentary on Manusmṛti. 2.1.
   Hārīta's words quoted by Kulluka Bhaṭṭa.
   Kulārṇava Tantra—2.140.
4. Bhāgavata Purāṇa XI.27.7. Mahābhāgavata P. 8.77.

generality of Hindu observance to-day could only be classified as *Miśra*, so inextricably are the *Vaidika* and *Tāntrika* elements mixed up in it. The *Veda* and *Tantra* do indeed constitute the warp and woof of Hindu thought and usage.

*Antiquity of the Tantras* :

The *tantras* have been in prominence at a later date than that of the *Vedas* is accepted by all.[1] Though the *Tantras* claim their origin from the Vedas,[2] But the Tantric form of *Sādhanā* probably came into special prominence when on the one hand, the elaborate details enjoined by the *Vedic* sacrifices, taking a long-time to be performed, could not be accomplished by the people of feeble attainments, and when on the other, the *Upaniṣadic* method of acquisition of transcendent knowledge surpassed the intellects and equipments of the common people.[3] The *Purāṇas* were at this time preaching the *Bhakti* cult in order to place before the masses an easy method capable of being grasped and followed by all. Then the *tantras* offered themselves to the people, containing within them the essentials of *Vedic* sacrifices and oblations, the essence of the monotheistic philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhakti* cult preached by the *Purāṇas*, the *Yoga* method propounded by *Patañjali*, and the *Mantra* element of the *Atharva Veda*.[4]

According to Carl Clemen[5] "Tantra means literary production dealing with religion, philosophy and natural sciences and is of a later date than the *Vedic* literature." In its narrower acceptation it means the writings, which treat in a certain way, of religion, ritual, conduct of life, medicine, magic etc.[6] The history of the *Tantras* goes back to the 7th century

1. D.N. Bose and Haldar, Tantras : their philosophy and Occult Secrets, p. 2.
2. Brahma (N.K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana, p. 274.
3. Mahānirvāṇā Tantra, IX.13.
4. Brahma (N,K.), The Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana, p. 247-75.
5. Carl Cleman. Religions of the world, p. 125.
6. Vārāhī Tantra : quoted by Śabda Kalpadruma.
   Chakravarti (C.), Tantras—Studies on their religion and literature, p. 2.

and come down up to 19th. According to Farquhar the period ranging from 500 A.D. to 900 A.D.[1] is called a *Śakta* period. It is a period when *Śaktism* was prevalent in India and the works like the *Purāṇas*, *Upa-purāṇas*, sectarian *Upaniṣads* as well as the old and important *Tantras*, were written.[2] Orthodox people attribute a divine origin to the *Tantras* and thus claim for these a hoary antiquity. While some of these Tantric works may be fairly old, but all the tantric works cannot be supposed to be so. We may agree with Cintaharan Cakravarti about the date of the *Tantras*,[3] when he says, that as a matter of fact no particular age is possible to be assigned to the *Tantra* literature, which took a long range of time to develop. In reality the age of each individual work has to be determined on the basis of the available evidences, both internal and external'.

Though the worship of the goddess, is amplified in the *Itihāsas* like the *Mahābhārāta* and in the *Purāṇas*, still the most extensive exposition is found only in the *Tantras*. It is called *Tantra* because it gives us extensive knowledge relating to the *Tattvas* and the *Mantras*, and leads us to salvation.[4] The special feature of the *Tantras* is that these are open to the persons of all castes and sexes and are not subject to restrictions of the *Vaidika* religion.

Let us not accept for a moment the facile theory that the *Vedas* and the *Tantras* conflit with one another. They do conflict, if at all, in the same manner in which *Śruti* and *Smṛti* conflict, and in which the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas* conflict. The *Veda* is definitely supreme and eternal and if anything conflicts with it, either it must be explained or given up. The *Veda* is the world as idea in the cosmic mind of the creation, and the *Tantra* is an amplification of the *Veda*.

1. Farquhar—An outline of the religious literature of India, p 200.
2. Chakravarti, Chintaharan Tne Tantras—Studies on their religion and literature, p. 19.
3. Woodroffe John, Shakti and Shakta,
4. Dikshitar, V R. The Lalita Cult, p. 83.

*Śakti* :

The supreme deity of the *Tantras* is known as *Śakti*, inseperable from *Śiva*. *Śakti* and *Śiva* are not two or double stars, but are ultimately one and the same. These are the two[1] modes of the manifestation of the eternal and infinite *Brahman*, as *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* (but not that of *Sāṅkhya*) i.e. Mother and spirit, whom the *Tantras* describe as *Śiva* and *Śakti*.[2]

*Tantras* hold that *Śiva* and *Śakti* are inseparable like heat from fire, whiteness from milk, sweatness from sugar, luminosity from light, and weight from natural bodies.[3] It is the *Śakti* in the *Tantras* which is said to have brought the universe into existence,[4] She governs the universe and overwhelms us with wonder and awe. In other words it can be said that *Śakti* denotes *Brahman* and His divine energy, glorifying the mother aspect of the God.

1. *Śakti* is the reverse of the concept of *Śiva* who is *Sthāṇu*, and immovable. In one respect, it is the concept of Divine Energy in its static aspect, motionless, inhert, and without agitation; whereas, *Śakti* is the concept of Divine Energy in its dynamic aspect.[5] *Śakti* is the personification of the Divine Energy that has brought the universe into existence; and that preserves it from disruptive forces. In other words, *Śakti* is the creative and preservative energy of Brahman.[6]

2. *Śiva* is the emblem of the destructive forces that lie dorment in the universe.[7] Goddess *Śakti* is the fullest conception of *Brahman* in all its aspects, i.e. as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe.[8] Creation is a mode of Divine existence, and Divine energy sustains the universe that binds the atoms with atoms. Again destruction is also an aspect of

1. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. 1.16.
2. D.N. Bose and Haldar, Tantras ; Their Philosophy, p. 74.
3. Śakti Saṅgam Tantra—Kālī Khaṇḍa, 1.22; 98.92.
4. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, 4.10-11.
5. Ibid. 4.35-34.
6. D.N. Bose & Haldar, Tantras, p. 86.
7. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, 4 33-31.
8. Ibid. 4.35; 5.1.

Divine enery that goes hand in hand with the creative energy. Thus the creative, preservative and destructive forces are but the three aspects of Divine Energy that exists in *Brahman*. *Mahā Śakti* is the complete perception of *Brahman* with the three *Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*, and it is the personification of the creative, preservative, and destructive forces of the universe.[1]

*Śakti* is also the power of every God like *Indra, Viṣṇu* etc., in other words, she manifests herself as *Śakti*, power, force, or energy in everything and in every being. This universe is the manifestation of *Śākti*.[2] Now this is the concept of the *Śakti* conceived in the *Tantras*. A *Śākta* worships *Brahman* as *Śakti* or as He appears through the manifestation of His Divine energy, conceived in the *Tantras* as *Mahāśakti*.[3] God alongwith his Divine energy or attributes (which alone reveal us His existence), conceived as *Mahāśakti* or the fountain head of all energy, is perhaps the most profound philosophical concept of *Brahman*, preached in the *Tantrās*.

*Kālī, the goddess of the Tantrā*s :

The *svarūpa* of this *Mahāśakti* has been revealed in *Tantric* texts, in the *Dhyāna mantraṣ* of *Kālikā*. The *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* says that She is the great progenitor of the minutest and biggest things in the universe, and both the animate and the inanimate beings. This universe is begotten of Her free will, who is the beginning of all. The *Vidyās* and the Trinity, all owe their existence to Her. She is cognisant of the entire universe but none in the universe knows Her.[4] She is *Kālī, Tarā, Ṣhoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśwarī, Dhūmāvatī, Bagalā, Bhairavī, Chinnamasta, Mātaṅgī* and *Kamalā*. She is surrounded on all sides by the gods and goddesses. She is at the same time the grossest and subtlest matter. She is devoid of all

1. Devī Bhāgavata I.2.5-8.
2. Prāṇatoṣiṇī—p. 1079.
3. Śakti Saṅgama Tantra—Kālī Khaṇḍa 2.41; 11.
4. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 4.10-13.

dimensions and yet takes various forms. For the fulfilment of the desires of the *Sādhakas*,[1] She assumes various forms. She appears at times to destroy the *asuras*[2] and assumes four hands and occasionally two, six, eight, ten or thousand hands. She wears various weapons for the maintenance of Her world. She is the great Mother, she being propitiated, all the gods and goddesses are propitiated. She is *Ānanda* itself, or a state of eternal bliss which cannot be conceived by mind or words. When *Para Brahman* or *Mahā Kāla* is desirous of creating the universe, the objective world emerges from Him through the centres of realisation or *cakras*. He is ever-existence, pervades all and resides in all.[3] *Mahāśakti* is a *Mahāyoginī* connecting the links of creation, preservation and destruction and at the will of the *Mahākāla*, She creates the universe, preserves it and destroys it with all its animate and inanimate objects.[3] The destructive force also is one of Her aspects, as She destroys *Mahākāla* at the time of pralaya, and She is called *Kālī*.[4] She is worshipped as *Ādyā*, being the beginning of all. After *Mahāpralaya* She alone remains as *Tamas* or *Avyakta Prakṛti* in a state, inconceivable by words or mind. Though formless, She assumes various forms; though without beginning, She is the origin of all,[5] and She is said to be the Great Creator, and the Commander of all.

The *Tantras* are unanimous in describing Her, as in a state of eternal bliss and playing in the bosom of *Śiva*.[6] Her feet do not rest on anything except the breast of *Śiva*. She resides in the cremation ground, where all the worldly objects are being reduced to ashes i.e. their seed stage. By Her independent will she begets the universe with all its diversifications, and again sucks them to Her breast in the twinkling of an eye. Unobstructed is Her motion and multifarioas is Her disport. She is black in colour which means that all contra-

1. Mahānirvāna Tantra. 4.16-18.
2. Jñānārṇava Tantra —16.3-30.
3. Yoginī Hṛdaya 199, p. 301.
   Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 4.30-32.
4. Śakti Saṅgama Tantra—Tārā Khaṇḍa, 36.19-12.
5. Mahānirvāṇa tantra, 4.34.
6. Yoginī Hṛdaya 114, p. 228.

dictions like black and white, cold and heat, possible and impossiblc, birth and death, merge at Her feet,[1] and all distinctions disappear. She is sitting on a corpse which means that she exists in all inanimate objects. She has got terrible teeth yet She is conferring boons to all. She is open mouthed and yet is most affectionate of Her children,[2] bearing as in Her bosom all their belongings, physical, mental, and spiritual. She has a laughing attitude, yet engrossed in wielding the terrible Spirit of Time. She possesses three eyes with which She can peep through the immeasurable Present, Past and Future.[3] She carries in one of Her hands a skull, the receptacle of the Unseen and the seed of the universe. She bears in another hand a cutting instrument which breaks the seeds and puts them in full bloom in the form of the universe. Her hair is dishevelled, i.e. She is beyond all bondage and Her outspreading tongue lusciously sucks the blood coming out of the either corner of her fearful mouth. She wears a necklace of letters which are not other than the *Mātṛka Śaktis*, which constitute the universe and give it a shape. She is also described as being in a destructive mood standing on the bosom of the *Śiva* with a garland of several heads around Her girdle, in the cremation ground resounding with the howling of jackals.[4] She is neither the knower nor the non-knower. She is *Ānandamayee* where both positivity and negativity meet. *Kālikā* or *Ānandamayee* as She has been called, resides in the heart of *Mahākāla* (the Eternal Time) at Her independent will and appears as *Mahākāli*, *Mahālakṣmī* and *Mahāsaraswatī*[5] to fulfil Her sport of Creation, Preservation and Destruction. She herself manifets as these Goddesses and absorbs them in Her at the time of universal dissolution. She is Herself the Maker of the universe and its constituent.[6] She is therefore worshipped in both

1. Bose ānd Haldar—The Tantras, p. 202.
   Alain Danielou—Hindu Polytheim, p. 273.
2. Kālī Tantra, p. 71.
   Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 2.4.
3. Alain Danielou, Hindu Polytheism, p. 271.
   also Kālī Tantra qnoted in the aforesaid book, p. 462.
4. Śākta Pramoda, p 27.
5. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 4.29.
6. Ibid. 5.137-140.

the aspects, viz. as the bestower of all the possessions of life and also as the mighty *Śakti* that gives us *Kaivalya*[1] i.e. oneness with *Brahman*. This is all about *Kālī*, the goddess of the *Tantras*.

*Daśa—Mahāvidyās.*

The more usual classification of the goddesses, however, is, as the *Mahā-Vidyās*. These are held to be ten in number, and the number being probably selected to match the ten chief incarnations of *Viṣṇu*. These are called *Mahāvidyās* as sources of all that is to be known.[2] These are the most important deities of the *Tantras*. They have all different attributes, and are thus designated[3] :—

1. *Kālī* (sometimes called *Śyāmā*), is black in colour, and fierce in character.
2. *Tārā*, is a benign manifestation.
3. *Soḍaśī*, the goddess as a beautiful girl of 16 (also called *Tripurā*).
4. *Bhuvaneśvarī*.
5. *Bhairavī*.
6. *Chinna-mastakā*, a naked goddess holding in one hand a bloodstained scimitar and in the other she owns her headless trunk.
7. *Dhūmāvatī*,
8. *Bagalā* or *Bagalā-mukhī*
9. *Mātaṅgī*.
10. *Kamalātmikā* or *Kamalā*.

Of these the first two are especially the *Mahāvidyās*, the next five on the *Vidyās*, and the last the three *Siddha-vidyās*. As we have already discussed the chief of the *Mahāvidyās* viz. *Kālī*, now we give a brief description of the other *Mahāvidyās* in the above-said order.

1. Kālikā Upaniṣad, 1.
2. Alain Danielou—Hindu Polytheism, p. 268.
3. For names see Śabda Kalpa Druma—and Tantrasāra, two lists are these—one from Mālinivijaya and another from Muṇḍamālā Tantra.
   See also Śakti Saṅgamatantra—Sundarī Khaṇḍa 1.101-102. In this list there are some changes.

*Tārā* :

In the *Tantras* she is a goddess, who leads to the other shore.[1] She has a dual aspect, the one fierceful and the other pacified and luminous. She is also worshipped in Buddhism. She is of dark blue complexion whereas *Kālī*, already mentioned is of dark colour.[2] Tārā places her left leg on the breast of *Śiva*, who is lying like a corpse. She is of short stature with a protruding and She has a terrible appearance as dressed in tiger skin; and wearing on her neck a garland of severed human heads. She is in the prime of her youth and is adorned with *pañcmudrās*. She is possessed of four hands and her tongue is held out a bit and wears single braid of mat ted hair on her head.[3] The Ṛṣi Akṣhobhya resides in her forehead. Her complexion is as effulgent as that of the newly rising sun. She is three-eyed and stands in the midst of a funeral pyre[4] and the range of her teeth seems to be terrible. She is laughing, engrossed in her emotion, and is decked with ornaments worn by the women. She takes her stand on a white lotus in the midst of a wide expanse of water.[5]

*Ṣoḍaśī* :

She is the third *Mahāvidyā*.[6] and is as resplendant as the newly rising sun. She is also three-eyed and holds in her four hands noose, goad, arrow and bow. She is seated on a pedestal comprising of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Rudra*, *Īśwara* (*Idra*) and *Sadāśiva* and the alter on which she takes her seat is *Śiva* himself. On the alter is *Mahākāla* with whom the *Mahāvidyā* sports in joy. She, the goddess of sixteen, is the power of *Śiva* and is ruling over the three worlds. She is identified with *Tripurasundarī*[7] also.

1. Alain Danielou—Hindu Polytheism—p. 275-277.
2. Prāṇatoṣinī, p. 723.
3. Śakti Saṅgama Tantra—Kālī Khaṇḍa 2.37.39.
4. Tārā Tantra—quoted in Kalyāṇa-Śakti Aṅka, p. 224.
5. Kalyāṇa 'Śaktyaṅka', pp. 224-226.
6. Alain Danielou—'Hindu Polytheism', p. 461.
7. Śākta Pramoda—p. 176-178, 180-181.

*Bhuvaneśvarī* :

She is the fourth *Mahāvidyā*, and is considered the consort of *Śiva*. She takes care of the three worlds and feeds them, that is why she is called Bhuvaneśvarī.[1] Her marvellous radiance illumines the universe. The fruit in her hand shows her as the giver of the fruit of actions. She possesses a crescent on her forehead and a crown over head. Her breasts are full and surcharged with milk. She is three-eyed and her face is ever lit up with smile. In her two hands she holds the noose and the goad and in the other two the pose of granting boons and assurances to her devotees.[2]

*Bhairavī or Tripura Bhairavī* :

The fifth *Mahāvidyā*[3] *Bhairavī* is reddish like the morning sun. She is dressed in a silken cloth and wears a garland of heads on her neck. Her breast is anointed with *Sindūra*. In her four hands she holds a rosary of beads, a book, and the poses of granting boons and assurances. She has a cresent on her forehead, Her three eyes are as beautiful as red lotuses, and there is a bejewelled crown over her head. A mild smile plays on her lips.[4] As a goddess she is *Tripura Bhairavī* while as a *Mahāvidyā* she is designated as *Bhairavi* only. This is a benign manifestation of *Śakti* and is considered as the giver of knowledge.[5]

*Chinnamastā* :

The *Sādhaka* should concentrate his mind on a pure and fully blown lotus in the region of the navel. Within it is the solar region as red as hibiscus and surrounded by three lines, viz., *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.[6] Within that region is the goddess *Chinnamastā*, who is as effulgent as tens of millions of the suns together. Her mouth is expansive, terrible to look at, with tongue emitting out. The Goddess is drinking the blood

1. Alain Danielou—Hindu Polytheism. p. 279.
2. Ibid. p. 464.
   Śākta Pramoda, . 203, 207.
3. Bose and Haldar, The Tantras, p. 206
4. Śākta Pramoda, 260.
5. Ibid. p. 262.
6. Idid. p. 228.

that gushes forth from her throats. Her hair is dishevelled and beautified with many varities of flowers. In her right hand she holds a cutting instrument and wears a garland of human heads, She is naked and fearful in appearance. Her right leg is in front while her left leg is a little behind.[1] The Goddess *Chinnamastā* wears a garland of bones and a serpent in the shape of a sacred thread. She is on a standing posture on *Rati* and *Kāma* who are in the attitude of sexual embrace.[2] Her appearance is that of a woman of sixteen years with heavy and rising breasts. On the left and right hand side of the Goddess are two *nāyikas* called *Ḍākinī* and *Barninī*.[3] They also drink the blood streaming out of the Goddess. *Barnini* is red in complexion, naked and with dishevelled hair. In her left hand is the severed head of a man, in her right hand a cutter and she wears a sacrificial thread made of a serpent. She is of a glowing splendour. She is also of sixteen years of age and bedecked with various ornaments, and a garland of bones. The effulgence of *Dākinī* on the left side of the goddess is like that of the sun at the time of the termination of the *Kalpa*, resplendent like fire, and her matted hair sparkle like lightning. This *Dākinī* is of three eyes,[4] her rows of teeth are white, face looks terrible, in view of her frightful teeth and her breasts are heavy and prominent. This Dākinī is of very fearful countence, of dishevelled hair and nacked. Her protruding tongue is big. She puts on a garland of human heads on her neck, and holds a human skull in her left hand and a cutter in her right hand. She also quaffs the blood gushing out in another stream from the neck of the Goddess. Both Barninī and Dākinī are serving the Goddess.

*Dhūmāvatī* :

*Dhūmāvatī* is pale in complexion,[5] ever moving stern and of tall stature. Her cloth is also dirty, her hair disorderly and colourless, she is without teeth and her breasts are hang-

1. Śākta Pramoda, p. 225.
2. Ibid. p. 227.
3. Ibid. p. 229.
4. Ibid.
5. Śakti Saṅgama Tantra—Tārā Khaṇḍa, 30.23-24.

ing. She is in the garb of a widow[1] and rides a chariot over which sits a crow. Her two eyes are stern without sight of tenderness. In one of her hands she has a winnowing fan and her other hand is in the attitude of granting boons Her nose is big, and the body and eye crooked [2] She is afflicted with hunger and thirst, of terrible mien and of quarrel some nature. She is the goddess of poverty, frustration. despair, and is gernally identified with misfortune.[3]

*Bagalā* :

The Goddess Bagalā[4] is seated on a throne, placed on an altar beset with gems, in a *maṇḍapa* bespanged with gems and in the midst of an ocean of nectar. She is of yellow countenance and puts on a yellow cloth and is adorned all over with garlands. The Goddess holding the tip of the tongue of the enemy in her left hand, belabours him with a mace taken up in her right hand. She has two hands and is covered all over in yellow.[5]

*Mātaṅgī* :

The Goddess is of dark complexion[6] with a crescent on her forehead, and having three eyes. In her four hands she holds the sword, *Kheṭaka*, noose and goad. The Goddess is seated on a throne made of precious stones.

*Kamalā* :

The complexion of the Goddess is as bright as gold.[7] Four elephants resembling four hillocks of gold are coronating the Goddess by holding four pitchers containing nectar with

1. Toḍala Tantra, Pāṭala 1.
2. Alain Danilou, Hindu Poiytheism, p. 465.
3. Śākta Pramoda, p. 281, 287-288, 290.
4. Śakti Saṅgam Tantra Tārā Khaṇḍa 30.25-26.
5. Śatka Pramoda, p. 307, 309. 310-311.
6. Ibid. p. 335, 337.
   Śakti Saṅgam Tantra Tārā Khaṇḍa. 30.22b-23.
7. Ibid. p. 355; 357; 361.
   Śakti Saṅgam Tantra—Tārā Khaṇḍa 30.21-22a.

their trunks. In her four hands she holds two lotuses and shows postures of granting boons and assurances. Her head is decked with begemmed crown, She is wearing a silk cloth and is seated on a lotus.

Each of the goddesses worshipped by the *Śāktas* has a *Yantra*, assigned to her, which is sometimes placed in the centre of a lotus-diagram. The *Śrī-cakra* is a principal *Yantra*,[1] delineated in a diagram of this kind and then worshipped. It is supposed to represent the orb of the earth, nine triangles being drawn within the circle to denote the nine continents. In the centre is the drawing of a mouth, which is believed to typify the female energy (*Śakti*) presiding over the circle. According to some authorities, even the *Śaṅkarācārya* was a *Śakti* worshipper as he is known to have placed a representation of the *Śrī Cākra* in each of the four monastries founded by him and *Śrī Cakra* has also been described in his *Saundarya Laharī*.[2]

The *Yantras* or mystic diagrams are thought to be quite effective[3] in their operation like the *Mantras*, and of course a combination of both is held to be absolutely irresistible. Salvation and supreme felicity in a future state is obtained by drawing a six-sided or eight sided diagram and writing a particular *Mantra* underneath. Triangular, pentangular, and nine-triangled *Yantras* are equally efficacious.

*Kuṇḍalinī Śakti Yoga* :

According to *Śivasaṁhitā* there are four kinds of *Yoga* : *Mantrayoga*, *Haṭhayoga*, *Layayoga*, and *R jyoga*. the Yoga through the rousing of *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti* is *Laya Yoga*, it means the piercing by the *Kuṇḍalinī*, *Śakti* of the six bodily centres or *Cakras* (also called *Padmas*-lotuses).[4]

1. Alain. Danielou Hindu Polytheism, p. 359.
2. Saundarya Laharī, V. 11. p, 52.
   ed. Normaṇ Brown, Harvard University Press, 1258.
3. Woodroffe, Shakti and Shakta, p. 513.
4. Śiva Saṁhitā V.14.

*Yoga* means that process by which the human spirit (*Jivātmā*) is brought into near and constant communication with, or is merged, in the Divine Spirit (*Paramātmā*) as the nature of the human spirit is held to be separate from, (*Dvaita*, or *Visistādvaita*) or one with (*Advaita*) the Divine spirit. The *Śāktas* are *Advaitavādins*,[1] and according to them, identity of the two (*Jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā*) is to be realised by the Yogi.

*Kuṇḍalinī, as Śabda Brahman* :—

All the *Māntras* are supposed to be the manifestations of *Kula Kuṇḍalinī*, which is a name for the *Śabda Brahman* or *Saguṇa-Brahman* in individual bodies. *Kuṇḍalinī* believed to be in the *Mūlādhāra Cakra*[2] (or basic bodily centre) is 'the cause of sweet, indistinct, and murmuring *Dhvani*, which is compared to the humming sound of a black bee. Thence *Śabda* originates and being first i.e. *Parā* gradually manifests upwards as *Paśyanti*, *Madhyamā*, and *Vaikharī*, (the spoken speech).[3] The substance of all *Mantras*, being manifestation of *Kuṇḍalinī*, is consciousness (*cit*), manifesting as letters and words. The letters of the alphabet, are called *Akṣara* because they are the diagrammatic representation, or *Yantra* of the *Akṣara*, i.e. Imperishable *Brahman*. This is realized, however, when the *Sādhaka's Śakti* generated by *Sādhanā* is united with *Mantra Śakti*. The different aspects of *Devatās* as presiding deities of *Mantras* are the manifestation of the gross (*sthūla*) form of *Kuṇḍalinī*,[4] who is however extremely subtle. "*Mantra* and *Devatā* are thus one and are particular forms of *Brahman* as *Śiva Śakti*.[5]

1. Campbell (J), Philosophies of India, p. 570.
2. Śāradā Tilaka I, p. 12.
   Mātṛka Bheda Tantra 3.4.
3. Yoginī Hṛdaya I.36-38; 40.
   Vākya Padīya—Brahma Khaṇḍa 141.
   Śiva Dṛshti—2.1-2.
   Pratyabhijña Hṛdaya, 8. p. 18.
4. Prāṇa Toṣinī, p. 76, 299.
5. Jñānārṇava Tantra 13.46.
   John, Woodroffe, Shakti and Shakta, p. 471.

*Nāda-Bindu-Kalā* :

From the *Sakala Parameśvara*, who has been produced from *Saccidānanda*, issued *Śakti*; from *Śakti* came *Nāda*;[1] and from *Nāda* issued *Bindu*, the latter being perfected out of *Ardhachandra*, issuing out of *Nāda* and becoming slightly operative towards 'speakable' (*Vacya*). The *Bindu* becomes threefold as the *Kāmakalā*, or creative will. This triangle of Divine Desire i.e. *Kāmakalā* is personified as the Great *Devī Tripura Sundarī*.[2]

*Six Cakras* :

Out of the six bodily *cakras*; five lower ones are situated within the spinal cord, a compound of grey and white brain nerves. *Mūlādhāra* is the lowest in the terminal, and in a midway position in the perineum between the root of the genitals and the anus. Proceeding upwards and controlling gentitals is the *Svādhishthāna*, controlling the navel region i.e. abdomen is Maṇipura, controlling the heart is *Anāhata* and controlling the throat-larynx is *Viśuddha*. Between the eyebrows is *Ājñā*, the sixth *Cakra*, and above them all in the cerebrum is *Sahasrāra*, a thousand-petalled lotus, and the highest centre of manifestation of Consciousness in the body.[3]

These six *Cakras* or lotuses have respectively four, six, ten, twelve, sixteen and two petals which are configurations made by the position of *Yoga-Nādis* at any particular centre. These *Nādis* are not those, which are known to the *Vaidyas* or the medical *śāstras*, but these are subtle channels (*Vivara*) alongwhich the *Prāṇic* current flaws.[4] The six *cakras* have their correspondences in physical body in the following nerve plexuses commencing from the lowest, the *Mūlādhāra*[5]: The Sacrococcygeal plexus,the Sacral plexus, the Solar plexus (which

1. Jñānarṇava Tantra 10.1-7.
   Śāradā Tilaka 1.7.
2. Ibid. 10 8.
3. Prāṇa Toṣinī p. 851-857.
   Bose and Haldar, The Tantras, p. 184.
4. Woodroffe, J. ; Śakti and Śakta, p. 410.
5. Ibid.

forms the great junction of the right and left chains *Idā* and *Pingalā* with the cerebro-spinal axis) and Cennected with this is the Lumbar plexus. Then follows the Cardiac plexus (*Anāhata*), Laryngeal plexus and lastly the *Ājñā* or cerebellum identified by some with the pineal Gland, the centre of the third or spiritual eye. It has two lobes and above this the *Manas Cakra* or sensorium consists six, the *Soma Cakra*, the middle Cerebrum and lastly is the *Sahasrāra* the upper Cerebrum. To a great extent these localizations are yet tentative. The six *Cakras* themselves are vital centres of consciousness, within the spinal column.

*Samādhi* :

The Practitioners of this *Yoga* hold that it is higher than any other system and that Samādhi (ecstasy) attained thereby is more perfect. The *Samādhi* of *Laya-Yoga* however is said to be *Savikalpa Samādhi*, and that of *Rāja-Yoga* is *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*.[1] "In *Mantra Yoga*, worship and devotion predominate and in the *Samādhi* of *Mantrayoga* the state of '*Mahābhāva*' is attained, marked by immobilily and speechlessness.[2] While in *Haṭhayoga*, contemplation is made on the Light.

In *Haṭhayoga*, when *Samādhi*, called '*Mahābodha*' is attained; respiration ceases and the *Yogi* is without any sign of animation.[3] In *Layayoga* the *Samādhi* called '*Mahālaya*' is attained; there is no outer consciousness but the *Yogi* is immersed in the Ocean of Bliss. In *Rājayoga* '*Nirvikalpa Samādhi*' is attained; there is *Nirvikalpa* or detachment (*Vairāgya*) from the world corresponding the four *yogas*. The *Mantra*, *Haṭha*, *Laya* and *Rāja yogas*; all these are *Mṛdu* (of high degree) and *Para* (Highest).

*Mukti* :

Not only the *Mantra Yogi* but also the *Haṭhayogi* avails himself of the *kundalīyoga* for Liberation. The remaining two *Rājayoga* or *Jñānayoga* are termed as *Dhyānayoga*.[4]

1. Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā VI.17.
2. Śakti Sangama Tantra, Kālī khaṇḍa, 1.129-130.
3. Ibid. 1.121-122.
4. Mātṛka bheda tantra 8.25-26.

Thus there are two main lines of *Yoga*, namely *Dhyāna* or *Bhāvanāyoga* and *Kuṇḍalīyoga*. In *Dhyāna yoga*, *Smādhi* is attained through detachment from the world and meditation leading to cessation of all the mental activities or the uprising of pure consciousness unhindred by the limitations of the mind[1]. This meditation is sometimes aided by auxiliary process of *Mantra* or *Haṭhayoga* (other than the rousing of *Kuṇḍalīni Śakti*). The degree to which the unveiling of conciousness is effected, depends upon the meditative powers (*Jñāna Śakti*) of the *Sādhaka*, and the extent of his detachment from the world.[2] Here is no rousing and union of *Kuṇḍalīni Śakti* with the accompanying bliss and acquisition of special powers (*Siddhī*). In both the *Yogas* bodily consciousness is lost, but there being no union of the central bodily powers with the supreme consciousness, the *Dhyānayogi* does not possess the particular kind of enjoyment (*Bhukti*). There is certainly a difference between the *Bhukti* of the *Divyayogi* and the *Vīrasādhaka*, the latter has only a reflection of the bliss on the physical plane—a welling up of the true Bliss through the deadening coverings and trammels of matter. The so-called *Mukti* of the *Vīrasādhaka* is only figurattve. It is the *Divya-yogi* only who has both, *Bhukti* and *Mukti*[3] in his hand.

*Pañca Tattvas or Makaras*:

Generally it is thought that in *Vāmāchāra*, woman plays an important roll. But this is only partially true in the case of those *Sādhakas*, who worship with *Śakti* according to *Vāmāchāra* rites. But amongst the *Vāmāchāris* there are even *Brahmachāris*, *Sādhāka*, and followers of the *Nāthas* who never indulge in this type of *Śakti*- worship. *The Kālamukhas* and the *Kālavisās*, worship the *Kumāris* only upto the age of nine and the *Brahma Kaulas* refrain even from wine and meat. Now this means that this kind of worship is restricted to one section of the *Vāmāc-*

1. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 15.109-110.
2. Ibid. 14.112-114.
3. Ibid. 1.55; 4.39-43.
   Woodroffe—Shakti and Shakta. p. 499,

*hāris*, namely the *Vīra* class[1] while the *Paśu* and *Divya* classes are prohibited performing it. There are still further restrictions that a *Sādhaka* should perform this worship with his own wife, (*Svakiyā Śakti*) and it is only in the case when there is no wife that he may take some other *Śakti* for the purpose of ritual worship only.[2]

About the use of five *Makāras* in the worship, we can very well say that it is a continuation of ancient *Vedic* usage and not a modern invention. The *Tantrikas* have advanced an argument about this *Pañca Tattva Sādhanā*, that *Siddhi* can be attained by means of those very things which are the causes of men's downfall.[3] The *Tantra* says that the *Pāñcha Tattvas* are of various types, viz. of real (*Pratyaksha*) type, substitutional type (*Anukalpa*) and esoteric (*Divya Tattva*) type. As regards the second, even a vegetarian would not object to 'meat' which is in fact ginger and coconut water for wine.[4] As for the Esoteric *Tattvas* they are not material articles or practices, but the symbols for Yogic processes.[5] In case of the first i.e. the real *Tattvas*, the *Tantras* contain injunctions again t unrestrained indulgence of flesh, wine and woman.[6]

A *Sādhaka* is to practise these rites, for gaining the highest object, namely the unification with *Śiva* or God, leading to emancipation. These are considered the initial steps leading towards the finalgoal. The expression *Pañca Makāras* derives its name from the initial letters of the ingredients used in Tantric form of worship. This particular sect of the Tantrikas holds that these *Pañcā Makāras* constitute the very life of the *Tantras*, without which they cannot achieve the spiritual end.[7]

1. Mahānirvāṇa tantra 1.57; 51-56.
2. Ibid. 6.14.
   M.B. Jhaveri—Critical and Comparative Study of Mantrasāstra, p. 57-58.
3. Kulārṇava Tantra V.68.
4. Śakti Sangama Tantra—Kālī Khanda 9.16-33.
5. Ibid. 9.16-17.
   Prāṇatoṣinī, p. 1049.
6. Kulārṇava Tantra : 2.117-18.
   Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 6.13-16.
   Prāṇā Toṣini, p. 1050.
7. Śakti Sangama Tantra, Kālī Khanda 9.18.

Though outwordly these rites appear much abhorent, but there is a great esoteric meaning behind these. All these, wine, meat, fish and woman are objects of temptation and it is very difficult to overcome them. Worship of a young damsel as a goddess, and taking of wine for the purpose of concentrating his mind on the object of devotion only, is something very difficult, and requires the training of the mind. The devotee here has to relinquish his own desire and self and convert the various pursuits of enjoyment into instruments of spiritual discipline.

In case you have to take these in reality, the *Tantras* have prescribed the *Śodhana* ceremony which means the purification of all these five ingredients, before a devotee offers these to the deity or he partakes himself. The *Tantras* deal in detail about the purification of the *Makāras*[1] as well as of the heart of the *Sādhakā*. As we cannot offer anything with an impure heart to the deity, who is the object of our devotion, so we must purify everything and offer it without any selfish desire.

Esoteric meaning of the five *Makāras is like this*:—

1. *Madya*—the nectrine stream that issues from the cavity of brain, is called *Madya* or wine.[2]

2. *Māṅsa* : By this term we mean the control of speech —which is only possible in case of the *Yogīs*.[3]

3. *Matsya* : By fish we mean the system of respiration, drawn in and sent out. So the worshipper of fish means one who has controlled his vital breaths, this is called *Prāṇāyāmā*.[4]

4. *Mudrā* : It means the Residing place of soul in the body, and one who acquires the knowledge of this charming soul is the worshipper of *Mudrā*.[5]

1. Prāṇa Toṣinī Tantra p. 1042.
   Mahānirvāṇ Tantra 6.1-16.
2. Prāṇa Toṣinī Tantra, p. 1041.
3. Ibid. p. 1042. Āgama Sāra.
   Chakaravarti, C.. The Tantras, p. 41.
4. Āgama Sāra.
5. Ibid.

5. *Maithuna* : the most important of all these is the practice of *Maithuna*. It is observed like thus : "Co-habitation is at the root of creation, preservation and destruction: It is regarded as a great principle in scriptures and it achieves all ends and confers the most difficult knowledge of *Brahman*.[1] The meaning of *Maitnuna* here is the recitation of the various attributes of God, or unification with the God.

Thus we can say that this *Pañch-makāra* worship is not at all corrupt in spirit as it is supposed to be. The object is very high and these are various instruments of spiritual discipline.[2]

*Philosophy of the Śākta Tantras* :—

The *Śākta Tantras* hold that the Supreme Reality is *Parā Śakti*. That *Śakti*, before the manifestation of the universe and the souls, remains in a state of Quiesence or Repose, devoid as it were of the light of self-reflection implied in the nature of *Chaitanya*.[3] The unmanifest universe remains then absorbed in *Chaitanya*. This pre-creative state of Supreme *Śakti* is beyond the so-called *Parā Vāk* of the Yogins, which is the universal Matrix and from which the Vedas and the worlds emanate.[4]

This transcendent *Śakti* is co-eternal and consubstantial with *Para Brahman* which is ineffable, indescribable, unlimited and immeasurable.[5] Only with the grace of the causal *Śakti* or Mother of the worlds, this abovesaid transcendent state can be reached. Hence the *Tantras* say that every form of spiritual discipline is a sort of propitiation of the universal power.[6]

The *Parā Śakti* on this eternal plane has an eternal vision of this eternal universe, not as an object outside of itself but

1. Prāṇa Toṣinī Tantra, p. 1343.
   Dikshitar. Lalita Cult p 79.
2. Ibid. p. 9[?]2.
   Chakravarti (C ), The Tantras—Studies of their religion and literature. p. 42.
3. Saraswatī Bhawan Studies, Vol. X, p. 22.
4. Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari, p. 1-6, Part I, Brahmakaṇḍa.
5. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, 3.6-9.
6. Saraswatī Bhawan Studies, Vol. X, p. 23.

as its very self. This eternal vision is therefore a self-vision of *Śakti* beyond the limitations of time, space and causality and is a state of Perfect Quiet and Peace. The *Parā Vāk* or *Parā* is synonymous with the equilibrium of *Śiva* and *Śakti*.[1] The Supreme *Śakti*, as one with *Śiva*, transcends all *Tattvas* and as differentiated from, is the source of all *Tattvas* and is identical with them. In its later aspect it is the eternal matrix of the worlds and is of the Essence of Joy.[2]

Hence the *Śākti* has a double aspect; and in one it is identical with *Śivā*.[3] At this stage *Śiva* alone shines. There is another aspect, in which the *Tattvas*, the universe made of the *Tattvas* and the *Devatās* appear from it, both simultaneously and successively.[4] Śaktism advocates a position intermediate between absolute monism and qualified monism. *Śiva* is the static Absolute, *Śakti* is the conscious energy of *Śiva* who creates the world through *Śakti*.[5]

*Śivā* and *Śakti* as *Brahman*, are inseperable and non-different from each other.[6] *Śakti* is the supreme energy (*Parā Prākṛti*) of *Śiva*, the supreme self.[7] It is cons-cious, omniscient and the fountain head of all powers.[8] It is the source of all knowledge It is both, subtle and gross, manifest and unmanifest, formless and multiform.[9] The *Śakti* creates, preserves, and destroys the world at the mere

1. Prapañcasāra Tantra 2.43.
   Brahma (N.K.), Ibid. p. 286.
2. Śakti Sangama Tantra; Kālīkhaṇḍa 1.98-99.
3. Ibid. 1.102-103.
4. Saraswati Bhavan Studies, Vol. X, P. 29.
   Sakti Sangama Tantra, Kālīkhaṇḍa, 1.112-116.
5. Mahā Nirvāṇa Tantra 4.25-29.
6. Śakti Samgam Tantra, Kali Khanda, 2.11.
7. Mahā Nirvāṇa Tantra 4 10.
8. Ibid. 4.14.
9. Ibid. 5.10-15, Kālī Tantra 9.22.

will of *Brahman.*[1] In other words *Śiva* creates, preserves and destroys the universe through his Sakti.[2]

The *Brahman* pervades the whole world and it depends upon him. All the things are real with the reality of *Brahman.* He is menifested in the world[3] and creates it through his energy (Māyā),[4] i.e. his *Prakṛti.* It is imbedded in *Śakti,* his supreme concious energy. Though *Śakti* is formless, it assumes diverse forms through *Māyā.* Thus *Śaktism* combines absolute monism with the *Sānkhya* theory of evolution.[5]

The *Brahman,* however, can be approached not merely as the Lord *Parameśwara,* but also as *Parameśwarī,* the Supreme *Śakti.* For she is none else but Himself in another pose. "Thou art the *Parā Prakṛti* or *Brāhman,* and from thee has sprung the whole universe, O *Śiva,* it is mother."[6] She is the matrix of all that exists : Whatever there is in this world of things, with and without motion, from *Mahaṭ* to an atom, owes its origin and is dependent on thee.[7]

It is said in the *Tantras* that for the help of the worshippers, the good of the world, and the destruction of the *Dānavas,* she assumes various forms.[8] And it goes on to prescribe the best mode of worship, a swift course of *Sādhanā* for a man to effect his liberation from ignorance and achieve union with the Supreme consciousness, that is she. She manifests herselt multitudiously and sports in the richness of her creation from a million centres of enjoyment. By a progressive identification of his own consciousness with larger conciousness of the world Mother, the *Sādhakā* participates in the *Līlā,* has a joy of things and in that very process of self-identification and merger grows into the nature of the Divine Mother. All

1. Mahā Nirvāna Tantra 4.30-34.
2. Ibid. 4.23-27-
3. Ibid. 5.195.
4. Ibid. I4.127; 4.34; 5.19.
5. Sinha (J.N.), A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 746.
6. Mahā Nirvāṇa Tantra 4.10.
7. Ibid. 4.11.
8. Ibid. 4.15-16.

the elements that make for the sustenance, growth and luxuriance of life are drawn upon in their acme and used towards this fulfilment.[1]

The Philosophy of the *Tantras* is a well-adopted reinterpretation of the doctrines, expounded by the *Upaniṣads*. The philosophy is highly monistic in tone[2] and the dual aspects of *Śiva* and *Śakti* merge ultimately in an Inscrutable unity. An identity in difference or unity in diversity has been the last word of the *Tantras*. No difference has been shown here between *Jīva* and *Śiva*. *Ātman* conditioned by *Upādhis* or *Māyā* is called *Jīva*, but becomes *Śiva*, the moment it thinks '*Śivoham*'.[3] i.e. I am *Śiva*.

*Ātman* is freed from those accidental attributes. In the words of *Śiva* himself, a *Jīva* is entitled to eternal emancipation when he is liberated from the bondage of *Saṁsāra*, by the force of self realisation.[4] The *Tantras* have touched the keynote of the *Avaita* philosophy by accepting identity between *Jīva* and *Brahman*, and have repeatedly stated in clear terms that the highest form of *Yoga* is the attainment of unity of *Jīva* with the supreme soul.[5]

The *Tantras* have always insisted upon the supreme importance of *Jñāna*. Knowledge in its purest form is said to be the only way that leads to final emancipation. It has emphatically been asserted that *mukti* is attainable only by *Jñāna* and not by any other means.[6] The *Tantra* have only voiced the eternal truth of the Upaniṣads (न च पुनरावर्तते), when it says that *Jīva* once liberated is not born again.[7] Most of the *Tantras* have exalted the supremacy of *Brahmajñāna* in unequivocal terms. The *Tantras* have recognised two kinds of knowledge,

1. Pandit (M.P.), Studies in the Tantras and the Veda, p. 21-29.
2. Brahma (N.K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana. p. 292.
3. Kulārṇava Tantra, 9.42.
4. Ibid. 14.7.
5. Ibid. 9.30.
   Śakti Sangam Tantra, Kālī Khaṇḍa 1.117.
6. Kulārṇava Tantra 1.105.
7. Tantra Rāja Tantras 36.

one derived from the *āgamas* and the other obtained from spiritual experience.[1] The Rudrayāmala maintains that a *Tantric* worshipper ultimately becomes the same as *Brahman* through the help of *Brahma-jñānā*, and that there is no self-elevating religion like *Brahman-jñāna*.[2]

The *Tantras* affiliated to the *Śākta* school have explained the association of *Śakti* with *puruṣa* as the basic principle of creation. The same truth has been revealed by *Śaṁkara* just in the beginning of his *Ānandalaharī*[3] :—

The mysticism of *yoga*, has also been dealt with elaborately in the *Tantras*. The object of practising *Yoga*, as conceived by *Tantrikas*, is to acquire the power of visualising the Supreme Soul within the limitations of the individual soul[4]. One who longs for *mukti* is directed to think himself completely lost in the all-pervading soul, and to a *yogin*, the world of perception vanishes into the absolute.[5]

Quite in agreement with the *Vedānta* stand of point, the *Tantras* have maintained dual aspect of *Śiva*, namely *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa*. It is said further that from *saguṇa Śiva*, characterised by *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, arises *śakti* and from it evolves *nāda* and from *nāda* comes out *bindu*. The *Tantras* have shown a sublime ideal of spiritual experience which is in a sense different from all other forms of *Sādhanā*.

Last of all we can sum up that the philosophy of the *Tantras* is a reconciliation of the Absolute Monism of the *Upaniṣadś* and the dualism or qualified monism preached by some of the Purāṇas.[6]

*Nature of the Tantric Sādhanā* :—

The *Tantric Sādhanā* combines in it the elemens of *Yoga*, worship, prayer and meditation on the identity of the individual & the Absolute.[7] The *Tantras* accepted the monistic philosophy

1. Kulārṇava Tantra 1.109.
2. Rudra Yāmala Tantra.
3. Ānandalaharī—1.
4. Kulārṇava Tantra 9.30.
5. Śakti Sangama Tantra, Kālī Khaṇḍa 1.130.
6. Brahma (N.K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā, p. 275.
7. Śakti Sangama Tantra 1.56.

of the *Upaniṣads*, appreciated the value of worship and prayer along with the *Bhakti* schools, and like the Yoga system, laid great emphasis on the intimate relations between the body and tl e mind.[1] They preached an easy and short method of spiritual achievement, and sought to provide persons of all grade of equipment with suitable courses of discipline.[2] The *Sādhanā* contains in it, the elements of all the important forms of *Sādhanās* viz. *Yoga* and *Bhakti*, *mantra* and *Homa*, and *Jñāna* and *Karma*. All these when combined, go to show that the *Tantric Sādhanā* is the synthesis of all that was good in the various forms of *Sadhanas*, and that is why its promise to its followers, of the easy and speedy attainment of the end, is justified.[3] The *Tantras* promice to give to the *Sādhaka* not merely liberation (*mukti*) but also enjoyment (*bhukti*), i.e. not merely final beatitude (*Niśreyas*) but also progress (*Abhyudaya*)[4] in the world.

It is through the efforts of *Sādhaka* and the grace of the spiritual guide (*Guru*) that the Serpent-power (*Kuṇḍalinī-śakti*) which generally lies dorment at the foot of the spinal column, becomes awakened and joins the Absolute, who resides in the *Sahasrāra cakra*, i.e. the highest centre of the cerebrum [5] The word *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti* is used to indicate the spiritual power or Energy of the individual human being.

The most important feature of the *Tantric Sādhanā* is that the *Tantraś* recommend the combination of *Kriyā* and *Bhāvanā* i.e.action with imagination. Here it differs with *Vedānta*, which prescribes that realisation can be had through meditation (*Bhāvanā*) alone. The *Tantras*, though declaring the unity of *Jīva* and *Śiva*, differ from the *Vedānta* school, where the *Śivatva* of *Jīvā* is an established fact, while according to

1. Brahma (N.K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā, p. 83.
2. Mahā Nirvāṇa Tantra, 2.20-22.
3. Kulārṇava Tantra 2.21; 36.
4. Ibid. 3.96.
5. Brahma (N.K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā, p. 277. See also footnote No. 8.

the *Tantras*, the *Śivatva*(absoluteness) is to be attained through *Sādhanā.*[1]

In the *Tantras*, special importance is assigned to the *Mantras.*[2] The deity is identical with the *Mantra*, which is the infallible means of liberation. The *Tantras* believe in the eternity of *Mantra* and designate it as *Śabda Brahman.* The *Bīja māntras* are not mere words, but are a concentrated thought of great power, revealed to the *Sādhaka* in the hour of his profound illumination. The *Mantra Japa* is prescribed[3] for the attainment of the desired object.s

The *Tantras* lay great emphasis on *Upāsanā*, and this seems to be derived from the Purāṇas.[4] The worship of the deity, and the recitation of hymns in honour of the deity, forms a very important feature in the *Tantras* as well as in the *Purāṇas.* The worshipper identifies himself in meditation, with the deity he worships[5] and places before himself the fully blossomed condition represented by the deity as the ideal to be realised. Here we see that according to the *Tantras*, the realisation of the identity between the *Jīva* and *Śiva*, is the supreme ideal.[6]

The *Tantras* recognise three distinct states of *Sādhanā* viz. Purification (*Śuddhi*), illumination (*Sthiti*) and unification (*arpaṇa*), corresponding roughly to *Karma, Bhakti* and *Jñāna.*[7] The individual has to undergo various process in order to purify himself. This purification is to be attained through both, *Bhāvanā* (meditation) and *Kriyā*, and through the harmonious working of both, mind and body. The real worship of *Śiva*, is only possible by oneself, whose heart has also freed from all impurities. The last stage is of complete surrender,

1. Kulārṇava tantra 9.43.
2. Brahma (N K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā, p. 278.
3. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 5.83.
4. Brahma (N K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā, p. 278.
5. Gandharva Tantra 8 1.
   Śakti Sangam Tantra, Kālī Khaṇḍa, 8.22.
6. Kālikopaniṣad.
   Śakti Sangam Tantra—Kālī Khaṇḍa, 1.130-131.
7. Brahma (N.K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā, p. 280.

merging and unification. The *Jīva Śakti* is identified with *Śiva-Śakti*. In this stage, no worship, and no distinction is possible but there is only Bliss, eternal and Infinite.[1]

The *Tantras* are really an epitome of all the Scriptures of the Hindus, and contain within their compass almost all the special characteristics of the various forms of *Sādhanā*. If *Tantrism* prescribes actions of the most rudimentary type and seems to be very much particular about their infinite details, it again, prescribes meditation on the identity of the individual and the Absolute and thus reminds us of the high transcendent philosophy of the *Upanisads*.[2] It prescribes different methods and rules for the conduct of life for the persons of different equipments and capacities. It distinguishes three classes of *Sādhakas* in order of merit, viz. the *Paśu*, the *Vīra* and the *Divya*.[3] The *Paśu* is a person who has not yet attained self-control but is attempting to have the mastery over his passions and impulses while the *Vīra* is a *Sādhaka* who has attained complete self-control and does not forget himself, even in the most trying and tempting circumstances. He is not only allowed, but is deflnitely instructed to include, such things as wine, meat, etc. as articles of offering to God,[4] while the *Paśu* is not allowed even, to touch or to have sight of those things. The method prescribed for the *Vīra* or the *Kaula* is beset with danger[5] and is more risky than the holding of a snake or clasping round the neck of a tiger. The *Divya Sādhaka* need not undergo the trials that the *Vira* has to pass through and is allowed to take substitutes of all material things in his process of worship. He does not require the help of external objects for rousing his spiritual sentiments, and the meditative mood emerges spontaneously in him. Apart from this class division of the *Sādhakas*, the *Tantras* also mention the *kaulacāra*, which forms the highest stage, and which does away with all rules

Mātṛka Bheda Tantra 12.44; 3.39.

1. Śakti Sangam Tantra—Sundarī Khaṇda, 2.186-137.
2. Brahma (T.K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā, p. 290.
3. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 1-51-53.
4. Ibid. 1.57.
5. Kulārṇava, 2.122.

and injunctions of the *Śastras*. For a *kzula*, there is neither any *vidhī* nor any *niṣedha*, neither merit nor demerit, and neither virtue nor sin.[1] Each *Sādhaka* have to follow his own line of development, according to his capacities and suited best to his attainments.[2]

The *Tantric Sādhanā* came into prominence perhaps later than the *Purāṇas*,although some of the *Tantras* might be dated earlier than the *Purāṇas*. The philosophy of the*Tantras* served as the basis of the *Bhakti* form of *Sādhanā*, inculcated by the *Purāṇas*.[3] There is so much similarity between the *Paurāṅika* and *Tantric* teachings that it seems unjustifiable to regard them as two distinct forms of *Sādhanā*. The union of *Śiva* and *Śaktī* (God and Goddess) of the *Tantras* are also mentioned in the *Purāṇas*.[4] The eternal connection between *Śabda* and *Artha*, and the regarding of *Śabda-Brāhman* and *Pāra Brahman* as two aspects of the Supreme Lord, emphasised by the *Tantras*, finds expression in the *Purāṇas*. The doctrine of the identity of the devotee is also mentioned with the deity herself.[5] In fact the *Purāṇas* and the *Tantras* preach almost the same philosophy as well as the same method of realisation and both emphasize the importance of worship and rituals. Both these preach the cult of Bhakti and last of all their god is also the same.

Thus we see that the *Tantras* give us a synthesis between the *Upaniṣads* and the *Purāṇas*, by accepting the philosophy of the former and the practical *Sādhanā* of the latter.

1. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 4.36-45.
2. Mātṛkā Bheda Tantra, 14.3-10.
3. Brahma (N.K.), Philosophy of Hindh Sādhanā, p. 81.
4. Śakti Sangama Tantra, Sundarī Khaṇḍa 4.55.
   Devī Bh. 7.15-16.
5. Kulārṇava Tantra 9.42.

## CHAPTER V

# RITUALISTIC ASPECT OF THE PURĀṆIC ŚAKTI-CULT

*The Vedas as an Authority of Dharma* :

The *Śākta Purāṇas* hold the Vedas in high esteem in the matters of *Sadācāra* and the *ceremonies*; and try its best to establish their authority among the people.[1] Devi Bhāgavata calls it '*Veda Saṁhitā*' and claims to contain the essence of the Vedas. It regards *Śruti*, *Smṛti* and *Purāṇa* as sources of *Dharma* and looks upon the first as the highest authority.[2]

It says that '*Śruti*' and '*Smṛti*' are regarded as the two eyes, and the *Purāṇas* as the heart. The presentations of these three only should be taken as *Dharma* and in case of disagreement among these three, *Śruti* is the determining authority.[3] In the *Purāṇas* there are certain matters, though derived from the *Tantras*, regarded as *Dharma*, but one must not follow them blindly. If the *Tantra* does not go against the *Veda*, it is to be regarded as an authority, if otherwise, then it should not be considered authority on *Dharma*. Every *Śāstra*, be it *Smṛti*, *Purāṇa*, *Tantra* or any thing else, should be regarded as authoritative, in case it is based on the Veda, and never otherwise.[4] All those people viz. the followers of *Kāmācara*, *Pāśupata*, *Linga Dhārin* and the *Vaikhānasa* schools, fare outside the pale of the *Vedic Dharma* and it is said that they all go to hell.[5]

1. Devī P. 1.55; 7.22.
   Dbh. I.1.16; I.2.2; I.16.15; II.12.4 and so on.
   XII.13.26; XII.14.26.
2. Dbh. XI.1.21.
   See R.C. Hazra 'Upa-purāṇa Studies', Vol. II, p. 92, 335.
3. Ibid. XI.1.21-22.
4. Ibid. XI.1.24-29,
5. Ibid. XI.1.29-31.

While discussing the ritualistic aspect of the *Purāṇic Śakti* cult, we have to bear in mind that it is of puritan style. The worship consists of *Pujā*, donations, sacrifices *Vratas*, meditation and pilgrimages to *Śakti Pithās*.[1] The *Pūjā* is of two types, one performed by the individuals[2] and second by the community. The large functions were arranged to perform community *Pūjā*,like *Durgā pujā* in *Navarātara*, *Ambā Yajña* and Ratha yātrā fair.[3] For an individual *Sādhaka*, the *Purāṇas* specifically prescribe the codes of *Sadācāra*. It is said that a man devoid of good character is always a failure in this world and afterwards.[4] *Sadācāra* is very much praised in the *Purāṇas*.

To honour the authority of the *Vedas*, the *Śākta Purāṇas* even prescribe the *Japa* of *Gāyatrī Mantra*, a *Vedic Mantra*.[5] In the performance of the rites and *Homa*, so many *Vedic Mantras* are utilised, and a great respect is shown towards the *Brāhmines*,[6] who are called *Śāktas*, due to their observances of *Vedic* rites.

*Śaktism—As a sect* :

Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa mentions many times the different cults of Hinduism prevalent in that period.[7] While it mentions *Yogis*, *Vānaprasthis*, ritualists, *Dixits*, performing *Tapas*, devotees of *Śiva*, *Ganeśa*, *Sun*, *Viṣṇu* and many others. Mention has also been made of the *Śaktas*—as an important cult of India, (as it has been indicated by its inclusion in the list just after (*Śaivas*). *Śakti* at that time was considered as one of the five (*Panchayatāna*) deities viz. *Śiva*, *Śakti*, *Ganeśa*, *Sun* and *Viṣṇu*.[8]

*Śakti*-worship was prevalent among the *Kirātas*.[9] Like other cults—Śaktism also included the *Śudras*, *Mlechas*, *Yavanas*, *Vrātyas*, ladies, married-unmarried or widowed—as their sectaries.[10]

1. Dbh. P. XI.8-13; XI.16.15-16.
2. Ibid. XI.16.17; 6.
3. Ibid. XI.13.26; XI.23.
4. Ibid. XI.23 24-28.
5. Ibid. XII.13.3-4.
6. Ibid. XI.24.96-98.
7. Ibid. I.17.13-14. VII.39.26-30. XII.9.72-75; 93-97;
8. Ibid.
9. Daśakumāra Charitam—I.57-58, p. 32-35.
10. Devī P. 22.5; 24.19; 13.51b-52a.

Sometimes the opposition was also there of the cult of *Sakti*, by the votaries of other sects.[1] It is said that *Siddha-Yogīsvara*, not worshipping *Śakti* had fallen from his elevated position. The *Purāṇas* give a long list of devotees of *Śakti* which are generally the kings, or the celebrated personalities of Hindu mythology or history. Besides these the people in general were also devoted to the goddess.[2]

*Adhikāris of Devī-worship* :—

The *Śakta Purāṇas* hold a liberal view about the position of women and the Sudras, and allowed to perform the worship of *Devī*. It allows them as well as the *Pukvāsas*, *Candālas* and others to perform the vows and worships connected with Devī,[3] and even prefers a qualified *Śudra* to a worthless member of any of the higher castes.[4] Women and *Śudras* are directed to perform *homa* daily in a sanctuary (*Math*) or a kitchen (*Mahānasa*) but never in a *Kuṇḍa*.[5]

A man who is well-versed in *Devī Śāstras* and has knowledge of the *Mātṛ Maṇḍala*, though he may not be a *Naiṣṭhika Brahmachāri*, is eligible for performing *Devī*-worship, no matter whether he is a *Brāhman*, or a *Kshatriya*, or a *Vaiśya* or a *Śudra*. A *Devī*-worshipper is to worship *Śakti* according to the prescribed formula and not otherwise.[6] The person knowing *Devī-śāstras* is honoured and respected by everybody.[7]

About the *ugra* from of *Devī*, it is said in the *Purāṇas* and also generally believed that the devotee of the goddess should have a strong heart, and while looking towards the fearful appearance of *Devī*, he should not be frightened. If he is successful in such a test put by the goddess herself, he is rewarded by her grace, gets all the things desired and

1 Dbh. I.2.47.6-8.
2. Devī P. 93.262-265,
Dbh. XII.9.59-63; VI.11.36-38.
3. Devī P. 12.51; 22.5-6; 23-24; 24.19; 88.4; 89.19; 91.1, 117.1-2.
Ibid. 6.40.
4. Ibid. 7.95; 51.4-5.
5. Ibid. 121.5.
6. Ibid. 51.4-7.
7. Ibid. 34.3.

help from the goddess. If otherwise, he may be punished,[1] even upto the extent of mental derangement.

*Devī Pūjā* :

By the study of the *Purāṇas*, it is known that the goddess was generally worshipped on the banks of the rivers, ocean, or tanks, and people ordinarily constructed *Devī Pratimās* of the clay.[2] In the *Purāṇas* only *Dakṣiṇa Mārga* was followed, which means that vegetarian way of worship was preferred, though cases of the offering of one's own blood have been enumerated. Human sacrifice was condemned and even the offering of the animals is not welcomed at least by *Brahmins*.

It is said that if a devotee worships *Devī* with a particular object in his mind, he gets the fulfillment of that object as well as the final salvation in the end, as a result of that worship.[3] The Media of worship of the different goddesses are usually *Pratima* (image in a temple), *Maṇḍal*, *Yantra*, *Linga*, *Ghaṭa* (pot), *Pustaka*, *Pādukā*, Sword, and *Chitra* etc.[4] A newly constructed image was first to be infused with life (*Prāṇa Pratiṣṭhā*) to confer divinity on it.[5]

*Places for worship* :

The different places are mentioned for Devī worship. *Devī Purāṇa* says that the goddess was worshipped in the cities, villages, towns, localities, in the temples, on the bank of the river, under the tree, on the top of the mountains, in the forest, in the houses, at the cross roads, on the gates of cities, forts or houses, on the bank of the river Ganges, *Vindhya* mountains, *Veda Parvata*, *Śrisaila*, *Kiskindhā Parvata* etc., varying

1. Nārada P. II.69.4-5.
2. Dbh. VI.17.6.
3 Devī P. 88.2-3.
4. Kalika P. 59.185-186; 60.21-32.
Devī P, 99. P. 143 of the Manuscript in Nāgarī script.
5. Ibid. 83.2-3.

according to the circumstances, means and different purposes.[1] Though these places, certainly render immediate results if *Śakti* is properly worshipped, but she may be worshipped anywhere else and the place will be callled *Śakti Peetha*.[2]

*Time and days for worship :*

Devī or mother goddesses are to be worshippod especiaally at a time when the sun remains in the *Kanyā Raśi*,[3] or in the evening. After worship lamps, full of *Ghee* may be offered. At the time of difficulties in the country, *Devis* are to be worshipped in the *Giri Durga*.[4] She is generaly worshipped on *Mahānavamī*, or *Mahāṣṭamī, Purṇamāsī*, the *Aṣṭamis* of every month, and Night of the *Divāli* day. The days preferred for worship are tuesday and saturday.[5] *Navarātra* worship is to be celebrated compulsarily both by the individuals in their houses and collectively in the public places—like temples, banks of the rivers and celebrated *Śakti-Peethās*.[6]

The word worship is designated by various names—*Pujā*, *Archanā*, *Saparyā*, and *Bhajana*.[7] The *Pūjā* falls under the *Kāmya* sacrifices. In a *Pūjā* ceremony the most important thing is that there should be something representing the object of worship, called *Pratīka* or *Pratimā*, for external (*Bāhya*) *Pūjā* and for Mental worship the mental image is required.[8] The worship is accompanied with elaborate rituals and ceremonies[9] and these rituals in the *Purāṇas* are different from the

1. Devī Purāṇa 90.5-8,
   Kalika P. 57.86-87.
2. Ibid. 90.9.
   Dbh. VII,30.85-101; VII.38.3.
3. Ibid. 117.7-9; 124.1-2.
4. Devī P. 117.5.
5. Ibid. 45.5-18.
   Dbh. VII 33.39-42.
6. Ibid. 28.4-5.
7. Karmarkar (A,P.), The religions of India, Vol,I, p. 197.
8. Dbh. VII.39.3-8; 34-47.
9. Ibid. VII.40.1-32;
   Kālikā P. 7.35- for yoga).

*Tantric* ones, as far as their aims and objects are concerned. In their nature also, these are not so complicated, mystical and mysterious ones as the rituals of the *Tantras* are. Here *Bali* and *Homa* are prescribed in every *Pujā* and *Yoga* is also given due place in *Sakti* worship. Music and dancing form an integral part of the worship. Idol-worship in the temples forms an important part of *Śaktism*.[1] The image of Devi may also be worshipped in the houses and for the worship of an idol sixteen *Upacāras* are considered essencial. The *Purāṇas* give in detail the steps of worship and these are given below in brief.

*Upacāras* :

The *Upacāras* are consisting of the materials used or things done. These are generally sixteen : (1) *Āsana* (seating of the image); (9) *Svāgata* (welcoming of the *Devata*); (3) *Pādya* (water for washing the feet); (4) *Arghya* (offerings which may be general or *sāmānya* and sepcial or *Viśeṣa*) made in the vessel; (5) *Ācamana* (water for sipping and cleansing the lips is offered twice); (6) *Madhuparka* (honey, ghee, milk and curd); (7) *Snāna* (water for bathing); (8) *Vasana* (cloth or garment); (2) investing it with a sacrificial string; (*Yajnopavita*) (10) *Ābharaṇa* (jewels); (11) *Gandha* (perfume); (12) *Puṣpa* (flowers); (13) *Dhūpa* (incense); (14) *Dīpa* (light); (15) *Naivedya* (food); and (16) *Vandana* or *Namaskriyā* (prayer)[2] and last of all *Dakshina*.

The *Purāṇas* and other works give various details in connection with the particular articles to be offered to a particular deity, e.g. the *Bel* or *Bilva* leaves and *Kalhāra* flowers to *Śiva*; the *Tulasi* leaf to *Viṣṇu*, the scarlet hibiscus (*Javā*) to the Goddess, etc. The *Mantras* may also vary according to the deity to be worshipped.[3]

1. Clemen (Carl)—Religions of the world, p. 127, Devī P. 69.19.
2. Devī P. 124.1-13.
   Kālikā P. 66,17-19; 73.100-104.
   Dbh. VI. 40,16-21; XI.18.3-48.
3. Dbh. XI.17.35-47.

In the begining of a worship, the welcoming (*āvāhana*) and life-giving (*prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā*) ceremonies of a deity, and at the conclusion, the act of the bidding of the deity (to depart) (*visarjana*) are essential.

*Mantras* :

*Devi Bhāgavata* mentions three *Mantras* of *Devī*. viz. *Vāg Bīja*, *Kāma Bīja* and *Māyā Bīja*, the seed *Mantras* of *Vāk*, *Kāma* and *Māyā*.[1] The *Kāma Bīja* is called the King of the *Mantras* and the persons meditating on that, cannot be overpowered even by gods.[2] *Kālikā Purāṇa* mentions the *Mantras* or *Gāyatris* of every goddess. *Gāyatri Mantra* is considered a sacred *Mantra*. Besides these three *Mantras*, there are other Mantras[3] which are used in the worship of *Devī* and in the sacrifices like *Ambā Yajña* or *Navarātra* ceremony.

*Nāmajapa* :

It is also an important feature in the worship and the Various names of Devi are to be recited. For that purpose the authors of the *Purāṇas* have given various *Sahasra-nāmas* to be read on sacred occasions[4] and besides these one thousand names of the goddess, we get the long lists of her names in the various *Purāṇas*. It is always maintained that *Nāmajapa* is a very meritorious act.[5]

*Sacramental meals or feasts* :

The sacrificial offerings are closely associated with sacramental meals. The primary notion of the offering, is a gift to the gods; it is mostly a food. It was the custom that some portion of the offering was consumed by the priests or the worshippers. The sacramental meal is obviously a joyous celebration.[6] When partaking in such a community meal celebra-

1. Dbh. IV 5.33; VII.30.93,
2. Ibid. IV.5.48-49.
3. Ibid. XI,17 36; Kālikā P. 24.13, 1-30.
4. Mahābhāgavata P. 23.1-94; Kūrma P, 12.60-199. Lalitā Sahasra Nama of Brahmānda Purāṇa
5. Ibid. VI.13.52, VI.11.61; VII.30.96-97. XII, 9.61, Devī P. 93.261-264.
6. Widegrey (A.G.), The Comparative Study of Religions, p. 284.

tion, the worshipper felt himself released from the displeasure of the god and goddess and he also felt renewed friendly relations with the worshipped. But these meals have another deeper significance i.e. the communion with the deity here assumes more intimate and mystical form,[1] the idea in the minds of the people, though varying due to time and place, is that by participation in these sacramental meals, the qualities and powers of the deity are assimilated in the human body. The *Purāṇas* dealing with *Śakti*-worship associate with every occasion of worship, the sacramental meals. First of all, *Brāhmiṇs* and *Kumāris* should be fed and then the relatives and others present there, as well as the devoteet themselves take part in these ceremonial feasts.[2]

*Yearly-worship* :

Devī is worshipped in all the 12 months and different articles are offered to her. The names of the goddess are also different from month to month.[3]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | *Mārga Śiras* | Rasa |
| 2. | *Pauṣa* | Ghee, & a cow made of Ghee. |
| 3. | *Māgha* | Tila. |
| 4. | *Phālguṇa* | Food-grains. |
| 5. | *Chaitra* | Clothes. |
| 6. | *Vaiśākha* | Barley, Wheat. |
| 7. | *Jyeṣṭhā* | Clay pitcher full of water. |
| 8. | *Āshāḍha* | Chandan, Karpūra. |
| 9. | *Shrāvana* | Butter. |
| 10. | *Bhādrapada* | Umbrella. |
| 11. | *Āśvina* | Gur, Sugar. |
| 12. | *Kārtika* | *Dīpa dāna.* |

and the cow made of gold may be given in all the months.

1. Widegrey (A. G.) The comparative study of religions. p, 284-85.
2. Devī P. 28.5; 33.48-109,
   Nārada P. I.123.73-75.
3. Devī P. 99.1-51; 79.1. Ch. 103-106.
   Note : In this Purāṇa it is said that Devī is pleased by the offerings of cows to the Brāhmnis, and full procedure for *Dhenu dana* is prescribed.

*Articles used in worship* :

The *Purāṇas* generally prefer to have all the vegetarian articles to be used in the worship of *Śakti*.[1] Though instances are there when we see that meat and wine are offered to Devi,[2] but *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* justifies it by saying that, if a devotee is habituated to take these, then only he should offer these to the goddess. The *Purāṇas* enlist the following things to be used in her worship and offered in *Naivaidya*[3] such as water, milk, *Bilva Patra*, *Pāyas*, *Dhūpa, Gandha*, *Kumkuma*, flowers, fruits, *ghee*, Mangoes, Sugar, Tila, Camphor, rows of lamps, *Candan*, Sweatmeats, rice, *Guda*, Sugarcane, oil of *Tila*, preparation of barley, *Indu* flowers, red lotuses, garland of flowers, *Ghantā*, *Cāmara*, *Yantra*, Silken clothes, ornaments, book, *Kambala*, red clothes, red flowers, and all other things, offered to her with devotion and *Śraddhā*.[4] Having performed *Pujā* In this way and having offered the *Naivaidya* to the goddess, one may perform other sacrifices. The worship gives to a devotee the desired objects and salvation. Now we discuss the other rites of *Śakti*-cult.

*Devī Pratimā Swarupa* :

An image of *Devī* may be made in accordance of all the *Lakshṇas*,[5] *Pratima* should be decorated with all the ornaments, *Mukut* on her head made of jewels, large ears and eyes, Her face shining with lustre, like lightening, having *Mālā* or bracelet; around the neck, blossoming breasts, three lines on the belly, big *Nitambas*; having big and fleshy thighs, feet along with *Nupuras*, hands having *Keyūra*, also having three eyes, and clad in yellow

1. Dbh. III.26.28-31.
   Kālikā P. 89.137-140.
2. Ibid. III.26.32.
3. Devī P. 28.3-9; 33.48-109; 59.1-32.
   Dbh. XI. 17.35-57; XI.18.1-70.
   Kālikā P, 59.1.94. 62.43-48; 66.15-16-19; 72.27-28; 73.19-36; 56-800; 100-104; 74.1-55 ;79.76-80;
4. Kālikā P. 59 161.
5. Devī P. 32.21-38.

garments. She should be depicted either mounting on lion, or sitting on throne. She should be in a pose of destroying the demons and enemies, and she may be depicted either with ten arms or twenty arms.[1]

1. Two hands—holding in one, *Aksh* and in the second *Danda*.

2. 28 hands—holding sword,[2] *Khetaka*, *Gada*, Rod, Arrow, Bow, *Hala*, *Mūsala*, *Pāśa*, *Tomara*, *Ḍhakkā*, *Paṇava*, *Tanjanam*, *Svastika*, *Abhaya*, *Aksha*, *Mudgara*, *Paraśu*, *Cakra*, *Damaru*, Mirror, *Śakti*, *Kuntas*, *Nāgapāśa*, *Naramuṇḍa*, *Daṇḍa*, making noice, and killing the enemies.

*Materials for Devī images* :—

The images of Divine is made of different materials.[3] viz. Gold,[4] precious stones, marvel, clay,[5] Metal picture, and wood etc.[6] varying according to the different objects to be achieved

*Devī Purāṇa* mentions that the images of the goddess are made of stone,[7] of *Indra-Nīla-Maṇi*, of gold, of silver, of brass, of *Muktāphala*, of food grain (flour), of copper, of *Sphaṭika Mani*, of blue suffire, of steel, and *Mantramayī* as well as of mind i.e. mental images made of Devi.[8] By worshipping the goddess in different images of different metals the person may obtain different results. By worshipping the images of stone—*Indranīlamani*, gold, silver, brass, *Kāmikā*, clay, *sphaṭika*, of flour, copper, *Muktāphala*, *Pravālaka* or iron—the results to be attained are, destructive power, lord of wealth, fame, movement, beautiful body. wealth, charming personality, overwhelming lustre, luxuries, motherhood etc. respectively.[9] *Devī Bhāgavata* mentions only *Mṛnmayī Pratimā* for all sorts of objects to be achieved.

1. Devī P. 32.32-34.
2. Ibid. 32.32.39.
3. Ibid. 50.20.
4. Ibid. 50.18.
5. Ibid. 32.20.
6. Ibid. 50.32.
7. Ibid. 30.3-15.
8. Ibid. 30.2, 17.
9. Ibid. 40.2.16.

*Devī Sthāpanā Phala* :

Installation of *Devī Pratimā* or construction of a *Devī* temple on the bank of river *Gangā* and *Narmadā*, or on the top and in the vicinity of *Vindhya*, *Arbuda*, *Himālaya* mountains, or on the banks of rivers, in the forts, in lanes, at the cross-roads, and in the forests, gives all suceess to the devotees.[1]

2. By the installation of Devi image in cemetry grounds, our enemies are destroyed.[2]

3. Installation in *Ekalinga*, tree, mountain, house, place for cattle, gives happiness and health.[3]

4. Installation in all the places, gives *Mokṣa*.[4]

5. Installation on *Navamī* of *Āśvina*, of the image made of clay even gives all success.[5]

Goddess being pleased by devotion and worship gives all happiness in the life and salvation in the end.[6]

*Temples* :

In the *Purānas*[7] there are references of *Devī* temples. A temple is mentioned amidst the *Vindhya* range.[8] A temple constructed by a devotee, must be furnished with all the upakarnas, and the outlook should be very good. It should be possessed of *Gantā*, banner, umbrella, towers, tent and mirrors. It may be having all the musical instruments and the archestra playing daily there. The learned persons should be welcomed there.[9] Whosoever, dedicates this type of temple to Devi, enjoys the world and goes to *Devī Loka*, and his pre dessors as well as the successors are also upraised.[10]

1. Devī P. 32.4-5.
2. Ibid. 32.6.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. 32.7.
5. Ibid. 32.9.
   Dbh. X.8.6-24.13.30-32.
6. Ibid. 32.12-15.
7. Devi Bhāgavata P. VI. 11.38.
   Devī P. 34.1-13.
8. Devī P. 34.9.13.
9. Ibid. 34.1-3.
10. Ibid. 34.4-8.

Very Good results can be obtained by constructing the new temples, as well as by overhauling the old ones. Even the images of the goddess are to be changed along with full details of the *Prāṇa Pratiṣṭhā* ceremony.[1]

*Donations* :

Each and everything, obtained in right way may be donated in honour of Devī. Even the vegetables and non-vegetables may be offered in donation to the virgin girls, or ladies, *Brāhmines* or devotees of *Devī*[2], and the Goddess is highly pleased by such donations it is said.

1. The list of articles to be donated is like thus : Land, gold, cows, paddy, *Tila*, clothes and *Ghee* etc. all the things, which are necessary for life.[3]

2. The places where the donations may be made[4] are enumerated viz. *Vārāṇasi*, *Gayā*, *Vindhyas*, bank of the river *ganges*, temples of *Devī* and *Pithas* of *Śakti* and all other places.

*Agnisthāpna* :

Maintenance of the sacred fire, was a duty of those, who are well-versed in the literatures of the *Vāmās* and the *Dakshinās* as well as in *Vedānta*, etc.[5] Homa was permitted to be performed by the members of the higher castes as well as by the *Śudras*, women and children.[6] *Agni* in *Devī Purāṇa* is having three names—*Agni*, *Hutāśan*, and *Anala* and it is said that the gods reside in these fires.[7]

*Vidyādāna* :

It is considered very meritable act to donate *Vidyā*. *Devī* is to be worshipped at this occasion with great devotion by the donator.

1. Devi P. 118.1-22. 1-8. movement of images to new temples, but not in North direction.
   15-22. Good results of this action.
2. Ibid. 102.3-4.
3. Ibid. 109.7-8.
4. Ibid. 102.5-7.
5. Ibid. 121.1-32.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

First of all the book is worshipped with flowers and other things; and honour is bestowed to the author, who is *Śāstra Pāraga*. The *Mātṛs* and other gods and goddesses are also worshipped on this occasion. Then the manuscript is taken in a car to a temple of *Śiva* or *Devī*, and is given to a learned teacher or a *Brāhman*.[1]

*Vasudhārā* :

It is a name given to the performance of *Homa* with the pouring of *Ghee* in the fire.[3] *Devī Purāṇa* mentions the different results by pouring *Ghee* into the fire by the people belonging to different castes and on different days specially on *Sankrānti* days.[3] It is said that goddess, satisfied with this *Homa* fulfils all the desires of a person.[4] Specially the Kings are requirted to perform this *Homa* called *Vasudhārā* according to their own means for their own welfare as well as for the betterment of the country.[5] The *Havana* may be performed in the *Kuṇḍas*, made of gold or silver or brass metals,[6] although *Ghee* and other things like milk, juice, grains, seasams, rice and *Kuśa* may be poured in the fire.[7] Different types of *Mantras* are given to perform different steps in the ceremony and *Vaidika Mantras* are generally preferred. But instructions are also there to chose *Mantra* from *Atharvaveda* only.[8] In the end a *Stuti* is to be made either of *Devī* or of *Agni*.

This home is to be performed by every one, without any distinction of caste. But the *Purāṇa* prescribes that the following qualities must be possessed by a person. He must be self-controlling; taking balanced food, well-versed in all the lores, habituated to perform *Japa* and *Homa*. He should abstinate from speaking with crooked and deformed persons and others.[10]

1. Devī Purāna 91.9-82.
   See also Devī Bhāgavata Māhātmya 5.67-68.
2. Ibid. 27.21.
3. Ibid. 11; 26;21.
4. Ibid. 5.3-5; 27.25.
5. Ibid. 25.6, 11.
6. Ibid. 26 9.
7. Ibid. 26. 38.
8. Ibid. 26;21.
9. Ibid. 27.17.
10. Ibid. 27.18.

Generally the Homa may be performed daily, unless there is some extra-ordinary trouble caused either by the lack of money, or shortage of *Ghee*, or revolt in the state and some dacoity takes place.[1] *Devī Purāṇa* gives a list of important and significant days when this *Vasudhāra* should be performed for the betterment by the individuals, and for the prosperity and uplift of the masses—by the king.[2] These days are :—the 8th and the 9th day of bright half of *Āsvina*, called *Mahāṣṭamī* and *Mahānavami*,[3] the full-moon day of *Kārtika*, *Vaiśākha* and *Jyaiṣṭha*, 12th day of *Āṣāḍha*, and 8th and full moon day, and days of eclipses and so on.[4]

*Ambā Makha* :

In the second book of *Devī Bhāgavata* there is a mention of *Devī Makha*. It is advised there by the sage *Uttanka*, well-versed in the *Tantric* cult, to the king *Janmejaya*, that you perform *Sarpa Yajña* under the pretext of *Ambā Makha*.[5]

There is also mention of the word *Devī Yajña Vidhāna*,[6] which shows that till the time of the composition of this *Purāṇa*, the texts dealing with ritualistic details have been composed and the cult was in its full swing during this period. It is said that *Indra* performed this *Yajña* and also King *Nimi* made preparations for that.[7] *Viṣṇu* also performed *Devī Yajña* for the sake of creation and last of all King *Janmejaya*, the great grandson of the *Pāṇḍavas*, performed it with great devotion[8] and with great pump and show.

*Rathayātrā Mahotsava* :

Though there are references of *Rathayātrā* of *Devī* in the other *Purāṇas*, but it is the *Devī Purāṇa* only which gives full detail of the celebrations.[9] It is celebrated with great enthu-

1. Devī P. 27.26-57.
2. Ibid. 27.36; 25.
3. Ibid. 27.29a.
4. Ibid. 27.29-33.
5. Devī Bhāgavata V.11.45.
6. Ibid. VI.14.29.
7. Ibid. VI.14.26.
8. Ibid. XII.13.2-10,
9. Devī P. ch. 31,
   Dbh. VII.38.45.

siasm and with pump and show. People gather to gether and take part in the function, and having worshipped the car, made of gold and jewel etc., covered with silk—bedecked with *Ghantā*, *Chamar*, *Patakā* and flag,[1] and Devi is placed on the car and worshipped, reciting the names of *Durgā*, *Kātyāyanī*, *Varadā*, *Vindhya-Vāsinī*; *Umā*, beloved of *Śiva*; *Mātā*; *Niśumbha-Śumbha-Mathinī*; *Mahishāsurā-Kshayankarī*; and *Sarva-mangala-Mahgalā*.[2] *Devī Purāṇa* says that on the prescribed dates viz. fifth, seventh ninth, and eleventh, *pujā* is performed first and having offered the *Bali* to the goddess, *Devī* is placed in a car. A *Maṇḍapa* of stone or clay may be constructed[3] at the mountains at the banks of rivers, and *Sangam* of rivers. After placing the image of the goddess in a *Ratha*, procession should proceed towards the *Maṇḍapa*. The procession is consisted of the people, ladies and children, and possessed of food, water, and the large number of *Naivaidyas* etc.; and while moving, *Bali*, may be offered to *Bhūtas* and *Pretas*[4] along with the recitation of *Mantras*.

Then reaching to the fixed place, take down the image of *Devī* from car and place it on a platform, made inside the *Maṇḍapa*; *Devī* is to be bathed with water poured from the new *Kalaśas*, made of gold, silver or copper, full of auspecious leaves and fruits along with the recitation of the *Vedic Mantras* and with music, vocal and instrumental.[5] Then follow the usual steps viz. *Pūjā* of *Devī*, feeding of *Kanyās*, *Brāhmins*, other poor fellows and relatives.

After this, *Devī* is to be placed on car again to bring her back, and followed by, a huge crowd.[6] The whole route of the procession should be well-decorated. Women are to utter

1. Devī P. 31.2-5,
   Bhāgavata P. 8.52.42.
2. Devī P. 31.6-8.
3. Ibid. 31.10-12.
4. Ibid. 31.14-15.
5. Ibid. 31.18-27.
6. Ibid. 31.28.

auspicious words and scatter flowers, *Dūrvā*, and rice etc.,[1] On this occasion each and every house in the city should be decorated and cleansed properly.[2] On this event of happiness and festivity, no tree should be cut down, no killing of the animals or of human beings, the prisenors may be released from the prison and one should try to control anger[3]. The Gods, *Yakshas*, *Kinnaras* enjoy the heavenly life by performing this festival, performed with great festivity.[4]

*Dhvajadānam* :

*Devī Puraṇa* says that the *Dhvajas* (banners) may be made of cloth, and their stick map be of gold, wood, stone etc. and having the emblem of lion or any other *Vāhana* on it, may be prepared and the temples be furnished with these flags and donated in the end.[5] This ceremony was called *Dhvajadāna* ceremony,[6] having the following constituents.

1. Performance of *Homa*.
2. *Devī*, worship, according to one's own means on *Navamī*[7] day.
3. Feeding of the girls and the *Brāhmins*.
4. Offering of food to the beings.[8]
5. Devotee has to observe certain disciplines such as Upavāsa[9] and should be pure, alert, and no contact with the bad people.
6. Welcoming the *Bhaktas* of *Devī*.[10]
7. With the recitatien of *Mantras*, banners were installed on the top of the temples.[11]

1. Devī Purāṇa31,29.
2. Ibid. 31.30.
3. Ibid. 31.31.
4. Ibid. 31.32-41.
5. Ibid. 35.6.
6. Ibid. 35.3.
7. Ibid. 35.9-10.
8. Ibid. 35.11, 19.
9. Ibid. 35.15,
10. Ibid, 35.16.
11. Ibid. 35.22-23.

8. Aims—It beautfiies the temple, fulfils all the desires. If king takes the banner in his hand he will be victorious in the battle and all the troubles are removed.[1]

*Kumārī Pūjā* :

It is only those girls who are healthy, graceful, beautiful, without any ulcers, and who are not bastards; these virgins, are to be selected for *Kumārī Pūjā*.[2] And the girls, who are defective in limbs, lepers, with ulcers, of offensive smell or whose bodies are polluted, born in a bad family, blind, squint-eyed, of disgraceful appearance, whose bodies are over-grown with hairs, who are diseased, are in their menstruation period, of passionate nature, very lean and thin, or born of widows, or of woman unmarried, are not to be accepted for *Kumārī.pūjā*.[3]

In all the cases, the *Kumārīs*, born of the *Brāhmin* families can be worshipped; when victory is desired, the *Ksatriya Kumāris* are preferred; when money is desired, the *Vaiśya Kumāris*; when general welfare is wanted, the *Śudra Kumāris* are to be worshipped.[4] In the *Navarātra Pujā*, the *Brāhmins* should select for worship only the *Brāhman Kumārīs*; the *Ksatriyas* should select *Brāhmana* or *Ksatriya*, and the *Vaiśya* worshippers can select *Brāhmana*, *Ksatriya* or *Vaiśya Kumārīs*. And in case of *Śudra* worshippers there is no restrictions and he can select a *Kumāri*, from any of the four classes.[5] But artists and artisans should select the *Kumāris* from their own families and tribes respectively.[6]

In *Navarātra Pujana* the worship of *Kumāris* is an important item.[7] Every day, during the *Navarātara* the devotee is asked to worship *Kumāris* ranging from the age of two years to

1. Devī P. 35.29-33.
2. Dbh. III.27.4.
   Devī P, 35.17-18; 89.23;
3. Ibid. III.27.1-3.
4. Ibid. II.27.5.
5. Ibid. III.27.6.
6. Ibid. III.27.7.
7. Ibid. III.26.40.

the age of ten. Not more than nine kumaris, according to the number of *Tithis*, are to be worshipped.[1] These nine virgin girls are named thus respectively, *Kumārikā*; *Trimurti*, *Kalyānī*, *Rohiṇī*, *Kālikā*, *Caṇdikā*, *Śāmbhavī*, *Durgā* aad *Subhadrā*.[2] The girls aged below one year and more than ten years are not to be included in *Kanyāpūjan*.[3] Different results are said to be obtained by the worship of the girls belonging to the different age groups.

1. *Kumārī* : The worship of *Kumārī* (of the age of two years) leads to the extinction of miseries and poverty, to the exserpation of one's enemies and the increment of riches, longevity and power.[4]

मन्त्र—कुमारस्य च तत्वानि या सृजत्यपि लीलया ।
कादीनपि च देवांस्तान् कुमारीं पूजयाम्यहम् ॥

2. *Trimurtī* : *Pujā* of *Trimurtī* yields longevity, and the acquisition of the first three aims of life, viz. *Dharma*, wealth (Artha), and desires (Kāma), as well as the rewards with the riches, sons and grandsons.[5]

मन्त्र—सत्वादिभिस्त्रिमूर्तिभिर्या तैर्हि नानास्वरूपिणी ।
त्रिकालव्यापिनी शक्तिस्त्रिमूर्तिपूजयाम्यहम् ॥

3: *Kalyāṇī* : Those who want learning, victory, kingdom, and happiness, they should worship the kumari named *Kalyāṇī*, the fructifier of all desires.[6]

मन्त्र—कल्याणकारिणी नित्यं भक्तानां पूजितानिशम् ।
पूजयामि च तां भक्त्या कल्याणीं सर्वकामदाम् ॥

4. *Rohiṇī* : She should be worshipped by the people duly with devotions for the cure of diseases.[7]

मन्त्र—रोहयन्ती च बीजानि पूर्वजन्मसंचितानि च ।
या देवी सर्वभूतानां रोहिणीं पूजयाम्यहम् ॥

1. Devī Bhagavata. III. 26.
2. Ibid. III. 26.40-43.
3. Ibid. III. 26.40.
4. Ibid. III.26.45; 53.
5. Ibid. III.26.46; 54.
6. Ibid. III. 26.47; 55.
7. Ibid. III. 26.51; 56.

5. *Kālikā* : For the destruction of the enemies, the worship of *Kālikā* with due devotion, is considered the best.[1]

मन्त्र—काली कालयते सर्वं ब्रह्मांडं सचराचरम् ।
कल्पान्तसमये या च तां कालिकां पूजयाम्यहम् ॥

6. *Candikā* : *Candikā* is to be worshipped with devotion by the devotees[2] for prosperity and riches.

मन्त्र—तां चंड पापहारिणीं चंडिकां पूजयाम्यहम् ।

7. *Śāmbhavī* : For the enchanting and over-powering of one's enemies, for the removal of miseries and poverty, and for the victory in the battles, worship of *Śāmbhavi* is said to be the only means.[3]

मन्त्र—अकारणात्समुत्पत्तिर्यन्मयैः परिकीर्तिता ।
यस्यास्तां सुखदां देवीं शांभवीं पूजयाम्यहम् ॥

8. *Durgā* : For the destruction of awfully terrible enemies and for the happines in the next world, the worship of *Durgā* is called the safest and the best.[4]

मन्त्र—दुर्गात् त्रायति भक्तं या सदा दुर्गतिनाशिनी ।
दुर्ज्ञेया सर्वदेवानां तां दुर्गां पूजयाम्यहम् ॥

9. *Subhadrā* : People worship *Subhadra* and all their desires are fulfilled and ill luck is removed.[5]

मन्त्र—सुभद्राणि च भक्तानां कुरुते पूजिता सदा ।
अभद्रनाशिनीं देवीं सुभद्रां पूजयाम्यहम् ॥

People should worship the *Kumāris* with the *Mantras*, beginning with *Śrī* or with the seed *Mantras* and giving them clothings, ornaments, garlands, scents and various other articles.[6] Thus by prescribing the worship of the girls and the ladies *Śaktism* tried to raise the social status of the womanhood in the society. The *Purāṇas* maintain that a girl or a lady is either her miniatuie incarnation or the goddess herself.[7]

1. Devī Bhagavata III.26,48; 57.
2. Ibid. III.26.48; 58.
3. Ibid. III:26:49; 59.
4. Ibid. III 26.50; 60.
5. Ibid. III. 26 51. 62.
6. Ibid. III.26.52. 62.
7. Devī P. 35.17-18.
   Devī Mahātmya XI.6.

*Durgā-Pujā in the Navarātras* :—

From the first day of *Āsvina* shukla to the 9th, is celebrated the *Durgā Pūjā* festival, called *Navarātra,* and it is observed all over India in some form or other.[1] Though there are two *Navarātras*, falling, one in *Caitra* and another in *Āsvina*,[2] but it is specially the *Navarātra* of autumn season, that *Durgā-pūjā* is celebrated in a grand style.[3] The *Purāṇas* and the *Upa-purāṇas* deal in detail with *Durgā-pujā* in the Navaratras in the month of *Āsvina*.[4]

*Objects* : This *Pujā* is *Nitya* as well as *Kāmya*. the *Kālikā Purāṇa* says that whoever, thorugh laziness, hatred or stupidity, does not celebrate the great festival of *Durgā*, has all his derires frustrated by the anger of *Devī*.[5] It is *Kāmya* because rewards are promised when one celebrates it. Everybody should always perform the worship of *Devī* in order to secure incomparable eminence which confers the aims of life viz. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma*, and *Mokṣa*, and one should worship her for the happiness in life,[6] for the destrucsion of evil spirits and for delight. The original purpose and objects of this festival were high and noble as stated in *Devī Purāṇa*. "This is a great *Vrata* conferring benefits on all the people, and vanquishing all their

1. Kane (P.V.). History of Dharma Śastra, Vol. V, pt. I, p. 154.
   Mahābhāgavata P, 48. 13-17.
   Bhaviṣya P.—Uttara Parva. 138,1-115.
   Garuda P. 38.1-12.133.3-17;
   Agni P, 185.1-15.
   Nārada P. I.110.30-35.
2. Nirnayāmṛta p. 56.
3. Mārkaṇḍeya P. 89.11.
   Devī P. 21.13.
   Kālikā P. 88.9,
4. Mārkaṇḍeya P. 89.1-15.
   Kālikā P. chs. 61-62.
   Devī Bhāgavata 3.26-27.
   Devī P. chs. 21-23.
   Māhābhāgavata. chs. 46 and 48.
   Varāha P. 28.41-48.
5. Kālikā P. 62.12-13,
   Māhābhāgavata P. 69.19.
6. Devī P. 22.5; 23.3-5,

enemies. It should be performed by the *Brāhmins* for solemn sacrifices, and by the *Kshatriyas* for the protection of the people, by the *Vaiśyas* for cattle wealth, by the *Śudras* with a desire of sons and happiness, by women for blessed wifehood and by the rich people for more wealth.[1] *Devī Mahātmya* attaches a great importance to it saying that by performing this Vrata a man becomes free from all troubles and is endowed with wealth and crops.[2] The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*[3] goes to the extent that all the sacrifices described in the *Vedas* and the *Śāstras* are not equal even to one hundredth part of this worship. But in the later periods, the objects were brought down to the ordinary level or below level and this *Vrata* was performed for the black actions in the medieval ages.

*Adhikāris* :

This worship is very much cosmopolitan in character and it could be performed not only by *Dvijas* but evenb y those who were outside the pale of the caste system.[4] At this occasion the worship has a social element also in it (such as inviting friends and feeding them), the goddess *Durgā* is worshipped by the various groups of *Mlechhas*, by the *Dasyus*, by the people from *Anga*, *Banga* and *Kalinga* countries and by the *Kinnaras*, *Barbaras* and *Sakas*.[5] Only one condition was there, that the devotees should be full of devotion, should have taken bath and should be cheerful and jolly.[6]

The worship of *Durgā* is of threefold character. viz. *Sātviki* worship, consisting of *Japa* and offering of vegetarian *Naivaidya*, *Rājasi* worship, is effected by *Bali*, and offering of

1. Devī P. 22.5-12.
2. Devī Māhātmya 12.12-15.
3. Bhaviṣya P. quoted by Pujā Prakash, p. 309.
   Māhābhāgavata P. 61,12.13.
4. Devī P. 89.19,
5. Ibid. 88.1-3.
6. Ibid. 22.6-7.
   See also—Mother goddess Kāmakhyā, Kākāti, p. 16-17.

*Naivedya* containing meat, and *Tāmasi* worship is effected by the offerings of wine, meat etc. The tāmasi worship is performed even without *Mantras* (prevalent among the *Kirātas*).[1]

*Pujā* :

It is known to every Hindu that the deities are deemed to go to sleep for four months from *Āsādha* to *Kārtika*. As *Durgā* is also asleep in *Āsvina*, therefore the first step in the worship is rousing of *Devī* (*Bodhana*) from sleep.[2] The devotee, begins on the first *Tithi* of *Āsvina* bright half and the *bodhana* takes place on the 6th of the bright half. On the first *tithi* he places a *Ghaṭa*, full of water and mango-leaves and then worships *Durgā* with 16 *Upacāras*.[3] On the Second day he offers a silken ribbon for keeping the hair in position. On the third day *Alaktaka* dye for reddening the feet, and a mirror is offered. On the fourth *tithi* *Madhūparka* is offered to the goddess, while on the fifth day he offers sandal wood paste, unguents and ornaments according to his means. The *Kālika Purāṇa* summarises the acts to be performed from the fourth *tithi* to the ninth respectively.[4]

The principal items in the *Navrātra* worship or *Durgāpūjā*, though it may be spread over three dayes (from 7th), or nine days, (from 1st to 9th) are four as laid down by the *Linga Purāṇa* viz. *Snāpana* (bathing the image), *Pujā*, the offering of *Bāli* and performace of *Homa*.[5] Though the bathing is said to be one of the most important item but in the Purānas it is substituted by the *Bodhna* ceremony, all and these are described in detail as follows :—

1. Mahābhāgavata P. 46.15-20:
   Skanda P. and Bhaviṣya P. quoted in Tithi Tattva, p. 68.
2. Bhaviṣya P. quoted in Durgā-Bhakti Tarangini p. 20.
   Mahābhāgavata P. 45.1.
3. Devī Bh. 3.26.13-24.
4. Kālikā P. 62.18-20.
   Devī P. 89.1-25.
5. Devī Bh. 3 25.46.

*Bodhana* :

On the 6th day, he should go in the morning near a *bilva* tree and utter a *Sankalpa*, establish a *Ghaṭa* and worship the *Bilva* tree as *Durgā*, and in the evening he should rouse Devi with the recitation of the Mantras[1]. After the awakening of Devi, she should be placed on a *bilva* tree, making a dwelling place for her, along with the materials viz. clay, sandalwood paste, *durvā*, grass, flowers, *rochanā*, gold, silver, mirror, lamp etc., and then he should come to the *panḍal* erected for *Durgā-pujā*.[2]

*Worship* :

The devotee should offer worship to the nine plants[3] and to the image of *Durgā* and make the *Devī* abide in the *bilva* tree. Then in the 7th morning he should offer the *bali* of boiled rice, for protection against the evil spirits. He should worship the goddess with salutations and with *Upacaras*, perform the *Praṇa-Pratiṣṭhā* ceremony and contemplate upon the form of Devī. He should put a flower on his head and make an invocation (*Āvāhana*) with *mantras* to *Durgā* to be present in the *bilva* branch and establish her with the prayer to bestow long life, health and prosperity. The worship of Devī in the *Ghaṭa* along with flowers takes place with separate *Mantras*. Then he should worship *Durgā* with *Pādya* and other *Upacāras*,[4] with due regards *Ārati* takes place and last of all *Dakshinā* is offered. The sixteen *Upacāras*, used in the worship of *Durgā* are slightly different, from the usual *Upachāras* in the worship of other gods.[5] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* contains a long dissertation on the 16 *Upacāras* and Special discussions are about the fragrent substances, flowers, *Naivaidya*, wine, fruits etc.

1. Kālikā P. 62.28.
   Mahabhāgavata. P. 35 41-44.
   Devī P. 22.10-12; 17-19.
2. Devī Bh. 3.26.7-35.
3. Kālikā P. 61.11-20.
   Mārkanḍeya P. 80.38-40.
   Matsya P. 260.56-66.
4. Devī Bh. 3.30.18-45.
   Devī P. 22.11.
5. Brahma Vaivarta P. 1.26.90-92 for Upacāras.

to be used in the goddess worship.[1] The worship is performed on 8th and 9th of bright *Āsvin*, but on the 9th day it is simply repetition of the process of the worship performed on 8th.[2]

Having worshipped the goddess, he should offer a kid on the night of eighth, and on the 9th *tithi* also. The kid or he buffallow should be dark in complexion and at least five years old.[3] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* gives a long list of the names of the animals to be offered to the goddess.[4] It includes in the list even the name of human being as well as the blood of one's own self. But it bans the females, and young ones of any one of the mentioned.[5] Still only the goats and he-buffaloes were sacrificed.[6] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* is bold enough to attach great importance to the offering of human being, by giving the name of *Bali*, *Mahābali* and *Atibali* for goats, he-buffaloes and human beings respectively.[7] It has to be remembered that though an animal is killed still what is offered to *Devī* is generally blood and the head of the victim.[8] This purified blood and head of the victim offered to Devi was called *Pīyusha*, meaning nector.

The *Kālikā Purāṇa* and the *Tantras* prescribe an elaborate ritual about the killing of the *bali Paśu* and offering its blood and head to the goddess.[9] The rites and the *Mantras* differ slightly according to the *bali* of a goat, he-buffaloe, or the devotee's own blood. The *bali* animal is made to face east, while the *sādhaka* faces the north and repeats the *Mantras*.[10] He should place the flowers on the head of the victim, sprinkle water and

1. Kālikā P, Chs. 72-73; and 61.26.28; 62.8-10.
   Devī P. 22.17-20.
3. Devī P. quoted by Kṛtya Ratnākara p. 35.
   Devi P. 22.12-15.
   Kālikā P. 63.14-15.
4. Kālikā P. ch. 71.3-5; 95-96.
5. Ibid. 71.96-97.
6. Ibid. 71.46-51; 112-113.
   Devī Bh. IX.30.78-81.
7. Kālika P. 57.2-6.
8. Ibid. 71.20-23.
   Devī P. 22.15.
9. Kālika P. 51.1.22; 71.105-112; 80.47-68.
   Devī P. 22.13-16.
10. Ibid. 71.38.

worships the sword with the *Mantra.* "You are the tongue of *Chandikā* and you accomplish heaven for the worshipper." Then he worships the victim and with one stroke cuts off the head of the victim. He collects the blood in a vessel, places it before Devi, and offers it to the goddess with *Mantras.* He offers the head of the victim and makes a *Tilaka* on his forehead with the blood of the victim. Then he performs *Japa* of the certain *Mantra* and also some verses of laudation and asks for certain benefits.[1] Though vegetarian substitutes for *Bali* to *Devī*[2] are also prescribed, and some families of higher castes as well as sectaries of vaishnavism practise it.[3] but the goats & buffaloes are offered to *Devī* by saying that a victim offered in a sacrifice to *Devī* goes to heaven and those who kill him incur no sin.[4]

On *Mahāṣṭamī* day a devotee has to observe a fast, keep himself pure and observe the rules for *Vrata,*[5] and worship *Devī.* On this very day he has to honour maidens, feed them and *Brahmins.* Though daily worship of the maidens is prescribed but he must do so at least on mahaṣṭamī day. *Devī Purāṇa* attaches the highest merit to the honouring of maidens i.e.[6] the Girls, varying in age from two to ten years, are honoured with bodice, clothes, flowers, edibles and so on. *Devī Purāṇa* also prescribes the worship of the married ladies.[7]

Recitation of *Devī Mahātmya* or listening to it is said to be of great importance for all the nine days.[8] The Offerings of

1. Kālikā P. 71.-6-18.57-58;
2. Ibid. 71.23-24.
3. Mahāhhāgavata P 46 15-18.
   Gauri Kalpa—quoted in the History of Dharma Śāstra, Vol. V, Pt. I. p. 168 footnote.
   also Durgārchana Paddhati p. 671.
   Mahābhāgavata P. 48.18-19.
4. Hemādri on Vrata, Vol. I, p. 909.
   Devī Bh. 3.26 32-33.
5. Kālikā P. 63.16-19.
6. Ibid.22.17; 35.17; 89.14.
   Skanda P. quoted by Hemadri Vol. I, p. 903-906.
7. Bhagavata. 3.26.37-62.
   Devī P. 22.19; 91.15.
8. Devī Bh. 9.50 86.

of seasum, curds, milk, ghee, meat etc. are casted into the fire by reciting the *Mantras*.[1] The *Mantras* are called *Jayanti Mantras*, and the offerings may be poured by reciting the verses of *Devī Māhātmya* of *Mārkandeva Purāṇa*.[2] Last of all the *Nirāgana* is performed.[3]

After every *Pujā* prescribed for the day, the family members, their friends and guests sit together and partake of *Praśāda*. They also participale in music, dance or *Kīrtana* while awakening in the night.[4] In this way this festival is celebrated in honour of *Durga* with great enthusiasm, and with full paraphernalia.

On the 10th *tithi* after bathing and sipping water, the devotee should offer worship with 16 *upacāras*, should praise *Devī* with the words "*Om Durgāṁ Śivaṁ*," should prostrate before her and make a request to *Devi* with the *Mantra*]'*MahiṣāghniMahāmāye* and with other verses,[5] take a flower and cast it on the image with the words forgive. Then he should raise the image of Devi, the bilva twig and nine plants and place them at another place, also lamps before them. The devotees should go to a river while performing dance, song, music, auspicious recitations and sports and immerse the image in the water after making a pra er.[6] Then performance of *Śabarotsavam*, the *Kālikā Purāṇa* dwells on this at great length saying 'that immersion of Devi's image should be made in the festivals in the manners of *Śabaras* i.e. people may make merry to their hearts content by indulging in sports and festivities.[7] This provision that every one, high or low, has to join the *Śabarotsava*—probably

1. Devī P 55.1-10 76.43.
   Kāikā P. 63.38-39.
2. Footnote p. 171, History of Dharmaśāstrā, Vol. V, pt. 1.
3. Kālikā P. 88 9; Mahābhāgavata P. 43.54-55. Devī Bh.3.30.78-81.
4. Kālikā P 61.88.
5. Mārkandeya P. 88.9.
   Devī Bh. VIII.30.60.
   Mahābhāgavata P. 48.7.
6. Devī P. quoted by Durgābhakti tarangini, p. 126.
7. Kālikā P. 6031; 62.20; 4,3; and quoted by Durgā Bhatriti Tarangini p. 21-22.

emphasized that before *Devī* everyone is of equal status and should perform this function on the 10th day to show the equality of humanity at large.[1]

*Paśubali or Bali* :

Animal sacrifice is an established rite celebrated for the goddess. Even the *Purāṇic* literature abounds in instances and prescribes *Paśubali*;[2] though it follows the *Dakshināchārī* system of worship. Generally this *Paśubali* was offered to the goddess *Candikā* on *Navami tithi*, especially in *Navarātra* days. The *Devī Bhāgāvata Purāṇa* says that this is not *Himsā* and it justifies the killing of the animals if they are offered to the goddess by saying that they will go to heaven and no sin will be incurred on the killer.[3] But the *Purāṇa* says that it is meant only for those, who are habituated to take meat etc.[4] The *Kālikā Purāṇa* also makes a prohibition of *Paśubali* by the *Brāhmanas*.[5] It is only the *Kālikā Purāṇa* which deals in detail with the process of *Paśubali*. This has been dealt within *Navarātra* ceremony.

*Devī Purāṇa* says that only those animals who are five years old, and perfectly in good health should be offered to the goddess, in the midnight of *Mahāṣṭāmī* or *Mahānavamī*[6] Still we find that this *Bali* was offered generally to the *Ugra* forms of *Devī* and not to the *Saumya* forms or *Sātvikī* goddesses. We find a list of animals to be offered. This list of sacrificial animals enumerated in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*[7] is very wide : viz. birds, tortoises, alligators, fish, nine species of wild animals, buffaloes, bulls, he-goats, wild boars,

1. History of Dharma Śāstra, Vol.V, Pt. I, p. 177.
2. Devī P. 22.13-15.
   Devī Mahātmya 12.10.
   Kālikā P. 71.191-193.
   Devī Bh. 3.29.20.
3. Devī Bh. 3.26.32b-34.
4. Ibid. 3.26.32a.
5. Kālikā P. 71.49-51.
6. Devī P. 22.13-15.
7. Kālikā P. 67.2-6; 71.1-5; 72.16-17.

rhinoceros, anṭelopes, iguanas, rein-deer, lions, and tigers.[1] Blood drawn from one's own body may also be offered.[2] Ordinarily females of all the animals are exempted from sacrifice,[3] but when mass sacrifices are offered, the distinction between the male and female is not observed. The horses and the elephants are not accepted by the goddess, they are meant only for special sacrifices by the Kings.[4] The *Yogini Tantra* enlarges the list and includes also monkey amongst sacrificial animals. While worshipping the goddess on the cremation ground only the buffaloes sacrificed,[5] and spirituous liquor is a constant accompaniment to the blood offering.[6]

This list seems to be made up of the various animals sacrificed by different tribal groups. Amongst the singphos, Lushais and the Garos, dogs are sacrificed on various occasions, amongst the Garos dogs are sacrificed only at the time of cremation, the idea being that the spirit of the deceased would lose its way.[7] Now dogs came also into reference in the menu of Hindu offerings to the means of the dead. In a place called *Aśva Tirtha* offerings to the spirit of the dead could be made. The offerings might consist of pure vegetables or flesh. The flesh of all the animals could be offered excepting that of bulls and dogs, which was prohibited in the Kali era.[8]

Though this rite is very ancient prevailing in pre-Āryan stages—still it enjoys very important place in the *Tantras*, and the *Purāṇas* also mention it but with a hesitation. From time to time the *Purāṇas* go on saying that this is *Tāmasī* worship and this worship is meant for the kings only and this should not be

1. Kālikā P. 71.18-19; 45; 139; 32.18; 71.73-89a.
2. Ibid. 57.4.71.153-166; 172-176;
3. Ibid. 71.96-97.
4. Ibid 71.46-48; 51; 5-6.
5. Yogini Tantra, 2.9.158.
6. Ibid. 2.7.170; 2.8.17.
   Kālikā P. 71.121,193.
7. Hunter: Statistical Account of Assam, 1879, Vol. II, p. 154.
8. Yogini Tantra, 2.5.156.

by everyone.[1] All this goes to show that the *Purāṇas* were assimilating the practices of the *Tantras* but with some precautions and modifications.

*Human sacrifice* :

The Human sacrifice or offering of human flesh, finds mention in the *Ṛgveda*[2] and other *Vedic* literature, at the time of performing the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice.[3] The man who is to be slaughtered must be neither a priest nor a slave, but a warrior or a man of the third caste (*Kshatriya* or *Vaiśya*). This pratice finds place also in *Śaktism*, and the *Śākta Purāṇas* abound in the various instances or exhortations regarding this practice of human sacrifice.[4]

The *Kālikā Purāṇa* gives very interesting details regarding the performance of the human sacrifice.[5] 'Having placed the victim before the goddess, the worshipper should adore her by offering flowers, sandal paste and bark, frequently repeating the *Mantra*, appropriate for sacrifice.[6] Then, facing the North and placing the victim to face the East, he should look backward and repeat this Mantra : "O man, through my good fortune thou hast appeared as a victim; therefore, I have thee; thou uniform and of the form of a victim. Thou by gratifying *Cāndikā*, destroyest all evil incidents to the giver. Thou, a victim who appearest as a sacrifice meat, for the *Vaiṣṇavī*, hast my saluations. the Victims were created by the

1. Devī Bh. 11.3.3; 11.7.40; 11.23.23-28.
2. Ṛgvedā—I.24.
   Ibid. Puruṣa Sukta, X.90.
   Wilson R.V. I, p. 60. .
   Max Muller Ancient Skt. Iiteratnre, p. 408.
3. The Taittiriya Samhita, iii.4.
   Sānkhyayāna XVI.10-16.
   Satapatha Brh. XIII.iii.6.5.
4. Devī Bh. 8.23.10.
   Kālikā P. 71.18-19; 45; 139.
   Bhagavata P. V.9.13-15.
5. Asiatic researches IV (1897), p. 371.
6. Kālikā P. 71.80-83.

self-born himself for sacrificial rites; I shall slaughter thee to-day, and slaughter as a sacrifice is no murder." Thus meditating on that human-formed victim, a flower should be thrown on the top of his head with the Mantra[1] : "O sword, thou art the tongue of *Candikā* and bestower of the region of the gods. Black and holding the trident, thou art like the last dreadful night of creation; born fierce, of bloody eyes and mouth, wearing a blood-red garland, salutations be to thee." The sword, having thus been consecrated, should be taken up while repeating the *Mantra* : "*Oṁ huṁ phaṭ*" and the excellent victim be slautered with it. Thereafter, carefully sprinkling the blood of the victim, water, rock-salt, honey, aromatics, and flowers, it should be placed before the goddess, and the skull also, with a lamp burning over it, should be placed before her with the *Mantra* : "*Oṁ, Aiṁ, Hriṁ, Śriṁ, Kauśiki,* thou art may be gratified with the blood."[2]

It is again stated in connection with the sacrifice of animals and human beings : men,[3] and blood drawn from the offerer's own body, are looked upon as proper oblations to the goddess Candikā.[4] By a human sacrifice, *Devī* is pleased for 1000 years, and by the sacrifice of three people for 100,000 years.[5]

*Bāṇa*, the famous Sanskrit poet refers to the sale of human flesh.[6] The *Mālati-Mādhava* of *Bhavabhūti* relates how *Mādhava*, the hero, tries to win the favour of the ghouls of the cemetery by the offering of human flesh, and comes to a temple of *Cāmundā* just in time to save his beloved *Mālati*, from being sacrificed to the Goddess by *Aghoraghantā*, the priest, and his associate *Kapālakundalā*.[7] This is a singular instance wherein a female is meant to be sacrificed. The *Kathāsaritasāgara* of *Somadeva* gives many instances of human

1. Kālikā P. 71.67-102.
2. Ibid. 71.20-46.
3. Ibid. 71.3-7.
4. Ibid. 71.7, 48.
5. Ibid. 71.18-19.
6. Harshacharita, p. 92.
7. Mālati Mādhavam—V.21-22. p. 229-232.

sacrifice in honour of *Candikā* or *Cāmundā*. 'One Muravara, a Turushka or Indo-Scythina, proposed to make a human sacrifice in the memory of his dead father. An expiatory sacrifice to the *Candikā* to save the life of a king is mentioned.[1]

*Offering of one's own head or blood to the Goddess* :

Offering of his own blood to a deity for the acquisition of religious merit in the next world had been an established institution in our country from early times.[2] It is, specially in the ritual works of the *Śākta* sect that we have clear directions for the devotee's offer of his own flesh and blood to the great goddess.[3] In the *Mārkanḍeya Purāṇa* we are told how King *Suratha* and a merchant *Samadhi*—erected her image and propitiated her with various offerings including those soaked with blood from their own bodies.[4] The goddess being thus propitiated appeared before them and granted them all their desires.[5]

How the goddess becomes satisfied for one thousand years, by the offerring of one's own blood and how she fulfils all desires in six months' time when one offers her a small piece of flesh close to his heart, is told in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*.[6] The *Kumāri Tantra* quoted in the *Tantrasāra* promises boon of royalty to one, who offers blood from his own body.[7] The *Matsya Sūkta* of the *Mahā Tantra* quoted in the *Prāṇa Toṣiṇi* compares the merits of different kinds of blood-offerings including that of his own body, by the devotee to the goddess.[8]

It is a matter of common knowledge that the rite of offering the blood, nearest the heart before the Goddess is much

1. Kathāsaritsāgara, Crooke, Vol. II, p. 168.
2. Ghoshal (U.N.), Studies in Indian History and Culture, p. 479. Pāyne—The Śāktas, p. 13;
3. Mārkanḍeya P. 93.7-11. Devī Bhāgavata V.35.28-29. Kālikā P. 71.153-166-
4. Devī Māhātamya 13.9-12.
5. Kālikā P. 67.172, 184, 185.
6. Ibid. 13.14-18.
7. Tantrasāra, Bangabāsi ed., p. 983-34
8. Prāṇatoshanī, p. 285.

observed by pious Hindu ladies of our country, down in our own times.[1] It is interesting to note here that the ritual works of *Śākta* sect seek to impose a ban upon the observance of this rite by the *Brahmins*. The texts viz. *Kālikā Parāṇa—Tantrasāra*; *Gāyatri Tantra* quoted in *Hara Tattva Didhiti*, forbid a *Brāhmine* to offer blood from his own body to the goddess.[2]

In the secular Sanskrit literature we find the mention of the rite. We may refer to a number of stories belonging to *Vikramāditya*, the king, who in favour of some suffering mortal, prepares to strike at his own neck with his sword, and thus propitiates the goddess, for granting him the necessary favour.[3] There is also a story of *Rājputra Viravara* who is said to have actually cut off his own head as an offering to the goddess *Candikā* for the purpose of saving his royal master from his impending doom.[4]

We may draw out some conclusion from this that the rite of head-offering was performed mostly for the propitiation of the Goddess *Durgā* to win some favour for the devotee himself or for others, and in some cases purely in a spirit of supreme sacrifice.

*Devotion—the means of realisation* :

The aim of all higher forms of religion seems to be the realisation of the ultimate reality. The followers of the *Bhakti* school regard devotion—(*bhakti*) as the essential and the most effective means to the realisation of the Absolute, unless *Jñāna*, *yoga* and *karma* are not attended with devotion, they are incapable of producing their respective results and work entirely in vain.[5] The *Bhaktimārga* lays special stress on the per-

1. Ghoshal (U.N.), Studies in Indian History and Culture, p. 482.
2. Kālikā P. 67.50;71.51.
   Tantrasāra, p. 934.
   Haratattva Didhiti, p. 9.329.
3. Ghoshal (U.N.). Studies in Indian History and Culture, p. 433, 414 f.n.
4. Bṛhatkathā Manjarī by Kshemendra, Hitopdesa III.8.
5. Bhāgavata P. X.14.7.
   Bṛhaddharma P. III.42.17.
   Devī P. 4.74.

sonality of God and regards the Personal God as the Absolute or the Highest Reality. Like all theistic religions, it emphasises the duality involved in the relationship.[1] The distinction between the finite personality and the Absolute, seems to be essential to the concept of *Bhakti*. In this respect it differs considerably from other paths. *Sādhanā* in *Bhakti mārga* seems to be comparatively easier to most of the persons. It is easy because it follows the objective path and deals with concrete things. It places before the devotee an object that attracts and interests his mind—and by this attraction the individual and the Absolute are linked together. Here it is said that one sould enjoy in order to realise the truth underlying the object of enjoyment aad should not be so much engrossed with the object as to be deprived of the capacity of looking beyond it to its source.[2]

All the *Purāṇas* dealing with *Śakti* worship preach the path of devotion, as the only means to realise the Absolute *Parā Śakti*. *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* which is considered a compendium of devotion to the goddess, gives extra importance to *Bhakti Yoga*. Generally the devotion towards goddess is *Mātṛ-Bhakti*,[3] unlike the Vaiṣṇavism where the *Bhakti* is either in the form of *Dāsya Bhāva* or *Sakhya Bhāva*—which means that either the devotee establishes his relation with the god as Master and servant or as a friend.

She is Mother of all and complete surrender to the goddess is prescribed.[4] *Śakti*, like God *Kṛṣṇa* in the *Gīta*, in *Devī Bhāgavata*, speaks to her devotees, saying that whoever surrenders to me is always dear to me.[5] the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* says

1. Brahma (N.K.), Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana, p. 233.
2. Bhagavad Gītā, 2.44.
3. Devī P. 4.74.
   Dbh. I.12.51.VII. 39,10.47.
4. Dbh. II.18.58.
5. Ibid. VI.22.56-57.VI.14.14-15.

that when worshipped with devotion, the goddess gives *Bhukti* and *Mukti* both.[1] There are *Devī Gitās* in *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Devī Purāṇa* and *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa* dealing with the topic of devotion to the goddess. In *Devī Bhāgavata Bhakti* is called of three types viz. *Sātvikī, Rājasī,* and *Tāmasī* and last of all *Turiyā Bhakti* or *Parā Bhakti* is also mentioned which is identified with knowledge or *Vairagya.*[2] Devi says that whoever is devoted to me becomes invincible,[3] even the gods headed by *Indra, Viṣṇu, Śiva* and others will not be able to do any harm to the devotees of *Śakti*. The devotion of Devi consists mainly of three things viz. recitation or *Japa* of the names, (*Nāmajapa*), worship with *Śraddhā* and praising of the goddess (*Stavana*).[4] The *Śākta Purāṇas* generally say that one should be devoted to Her lotus feet. In *Devī Bhāgavata* we find mention of *Navadhā Bhatī.*[5]

The *Kālikā Purāṇa* goes to the extant that one should remember Her while taking food, going for a journey, and while attending some social or cultural function.[6] A *Śākta* has to identify himself in meditation with the *Śakti*[7], he worships and places before himself the fully blossomed condition represented by the deity as the ideal to be realised. Here the *Purāṇas* follow the *Tantric* motto that "देवो भूत्वा देवं यजेत". The *Śākta Purāṇas* on this point differ from the usual *Bhakti Marga*, where dualism is an established step. We find the complete identification of the devotee with the deity, a stage higher than the complete merger or surrender to the deity, preached by the *Bhāgavatas.*[8]

1. Devī Māhātmya 13.5.
2. Dbh. VI.5.25-27.VI.37.28;
3. Devī P. 5.74;
   Dbh. VI.5.25-27,
4. Devī P. 7.6; 38.
   Dbh. VII. 37.11-12; IX.30.136-139.
5. Bṛhaddhama P. III.10.41-42.
6. Kālikā P. 60.3-28.
7. Ibid. 53.10; 59.104-105; 165.
   Dbh. VII. 37.15; 27.
8. Bhāgavadgīta 18.65-66.

*Devotees of Śakti in the Purāṇas* :

The *Purāṇas* have given some details with regard to the worshippers of *Śakti*. The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* contains a description of *Śakti* worship as celebrated by *Suratha* and *Samādhi*. They worshipped an earthen image of *Durgā* with all solemnity on the bank of the river. Their adoration, intense and selfless, was rewarded with success and the great Mother appeared before them to grant their passionate prayer.[1]

According to the current tradition and the *Sākta Purāṇas* *Rāma* was the first to celebrate the worship of the Great Mother (*Durgā*) on the eve of the great war that ensued between himself and *Rāvaṇa*. It is stated in the *Purāṇas* that *Rāma* untimely awakened the Goddess, since he was in a hurrry to bring about the ruin of his formidable rival. The worship of *Śakti* is calculated to have given him so much strength that he could easily come out victorious from the terrible warfare. This celebraticn took place in the month of *Aśvina*, and since then the autumn is regarded as specially sacred occassion for the invocation and adoration of the Goddess.[5] The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* narrates the worship of the goddess *Kātyāyanī* by thc damsels of *Vraja*, by the *Yadāvas*,[2] and by *Rukmini*.

Viṣṇu is said to have performed a sacrifice (*Ambikā-yājña*) according to the āganika rites for the sake of recuring the good grace of the Divine Mother.[4] He was a devout follower of *Śakti*. The king Sudarśana, son of Dhruvasandhi, was a descendant of the solar dynasty. In his early life he had to fight against many odds and was in a state of utter destitution. While a mere boy, he was, however, initiated into *kāmabīja* in a mysterious way and Constant repetition of the sacred syllable conferred all the blessings upon him.[5] Having regained the lost

1. Devī Māhātmya. XIII.7-18.
   Devī Bh. V.32, 35 chs.
   Brahma V.P. II.1.151.
   Śiva P. Umā samhitā 5.451.
2. Dbh. III.30 18-60.
   Mahābhāgava P. chs. chs. 36-48.
   Bṛhaddharma P chs. 18 22.
3. Bhāgvata P. X Purvardha 22.1-5X.Uttarardha 53.44-46.
4. Dbh. III 12.66 III.13-2-3;
5. Ibid. III Ch. 15-23.

kingdom of his father, *Sudarśana* went to *Ayodhyā* and built a beautiful temple there and placed the image of the Great Mother in a right royal fashion and Since that time the worship of the Goddess has been prevalent in *Kośala*.[1] *Subāhu*, the king of *Kāśi*, similarly made a temple at Benaras and established the image of *Durgā* which is still visited by the innumerable pilgrims.[2]

The wife of *Jayatsena*, was king of *Kāshi* a the worshipper of *Gauri*.[3] The king *Śūdraka* was a devotee of *Devī*[4] and similarly the King *Devapanna* is said to have been a worshipper of *Cāmundā*.[5] The King *Nahuṣa* is also described to have worshipped the goddess on the seventh day of the bright half of the month of *Bhādrapada*.[6] The kings *Aja* and *Raghu* also worshipped *Bhairavī*.[7] The king *Mahānandi* worshipped *Mahālakṣmī* at *Magadha*.[8] The King *Naraka* was a keen devotee of *Kāmākhya*.[9] The King *Rupasena* of *Vardhananagara* and his wife offered their son as a Bali in a sacrifice : but he was revived again.[10] *Patañjali* is said to have defeated *Kali* with the help of the blessings of the Goddess."[11] Further the followings are described as being the worshippers of the Mother-Goddess; King *Satyavrata* of the *Ikṣvāku* dynasty,[12] *Yājnavalkya*,[13] *Dharmadhvaja*,[14] *Sumada* (worshipper of *Kāmākṣī*,[15] *Kārttavīrya*, who possessed the *Kavaca* of *Bhadrakālī*, and others.[16]

1. Devī Bh. III.24 2:-52; III.25 27-40.
2. Ibid. III.25.41-42
3. Skanda P., Nāgara Khanda 177/6.
4. Ibid.—Kumārika Khanda (2) ch 40.
5. Ibid. 5.3.Adh. 169. v.5.
6. Bhavisya. P. 4.46.7.
7. Skanda, Prabhāsaksetra Ma, 58.29.
8. Bhavisya P. 3.2.3, 34.
9. Kālikā P. 39.163.
10. Bhaviṣya, P. 3.1.3.
11. Ibid. 3.2.35, 1.
12. Devī Bh VI.11.12.
13. Bhaviṣya, P. 9.5.1.
14. Ibid. 9. Adh. 15ff
15. Padma P. V.13.11-13; 18-34.
16. Brahmavaivarta, P. Ganeśakhanda, 36.41.

*Devī Purāṇa* mentions so many devoteess of *Devīs*, Specially they are either kings or the rulers of states. A king of Kanchi is said to be the *Bhakta* of *Devī*, he was fond of wine and meat and was enemical towards the *Brāhmins*, the gods and the teacher.[1] The *Purāṇa* says that *Paraśurāma* worshipped *Durgā* and constructed a temple of *Durgā* at *Ayodhyā*. According to the *Kālikā Purāṇa Vaṣiṣṭha* and *Naraka* were devout devotees of *Śakti*, even the *Prajāpati Daksh* and *Himvān* are said to be the *Bhaktas* of *Devī*.[2] The *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa* says that the *Pāṇḍavas* were devout follwers of *Śakti*.[3] According to this *Purāṇa* even *Rāvāna* was her devotee. *Devī Bhāgavata* says that all the forteen Manus were her devotees.[4] The *Purāṇa* also mentions the name of *Prahlāda*,[5] *Indrāṇī*,[6] *Hariścandra*,[7] *Yuvanaśva*,[8] *Nara-Nārāyana*,[9] *Śukadeva*,[10] *Madhu-Kaitabha*,[11] *Śiva*,[12] *Brahmā*,[13] *Vyāsa*,[14] *Kṛṣṇa*,[15] *Agastya*[16] and others as the devotees of *Devī*.[17] Thus we see that *Śaktism* had become a popular cult by the time of the *Purāṇas*, and *Śakti* was given a highly elevated position in the *Hindu* pantheon.

*Devī Vratas* :

There is a large number of *Vratas* mentioned in the *Purāṇas* and the *Upa-purāṇas*, pertaining to *Devī*. The *Purāṇas* have

1. Devī P. 44.2-11. 82.47-48.
2. Kālikā P. chs. 8; 65-41.
3. Mahābhāgavata P. 56.32.
4. Dbh. Xchs.1-13.
5. Ibid IV.15.22-71.
6. Ibid. VI.8.50-70.
7. Ibid. VII.27.1-40.
8. Ibid. VII.9.40-41.
9. Ibid. IV.5.33-50.
10. Ibid. I.15.1-60.
11. Ibid. 1 5.86-112.
12. Ibid. III 5.1-45.
13. Ibīd. I.7.15-50.
14. Ibid. I 4.65.
15. Ibid. IV.24.40-60.
    Varāha P· 160.33-75.
16. Ibid. X.6.1-6·
17. Ibid. IX.39.24-33.

also givcn a code of conduct to be observed by the devotees of Devi.

*Fast* :

Observing a fast is the essential step of these rules, and on the preceding day of the *Vrata* one has to practise abstinence and restraint both in one's food and personal habits. On the proper day he has to observe fast and then, on the ollowing day he has to take a very simple diet, avoiding wine, meat etc.

*Donations* :

Besides the observance of a fast, the most important item is the honouring and feeding of the *Brāhmaṇas* and girls and liberally making gifts to them.[1] Among the items of the gifts, gold, land, and cow rank the highest. Among other things are included, metals, pots, daily necessaries of life, like sugar, paddy, cloths, blankets, fan, footwear as well as all other articles of worship.

*Results* :

The majority of the *Vratas* are supposed to produce tangible results. Their performer is endowed with a beautiful form, and he gets immenese fortune, subdues the enemy, and is rendered free from all earthly calamities including various diseases. The issueless person gets a son, the poor becomes a rich, wife can ensure the welfare and love of the husband, one can regain his lost kingdom or property, and one separated from one's near and dear relations can be re-united with them. In short, all conceivable temporal bliss can be attained. The attainment of both the *Bhukti* and *Mukti* associated with the performance of these *Vratas*.

*Ladies* :

Though both, men and women are entitled to perform these *Vratas*, yet these seem to be primarily intended for ladies —married or un-married or widowed. By performing these *Vratas* and worshipping the benign form of the goddess, the ladies gain the freedom of their husbands and sons from all

1. Viśva Bandhu—Siddha Bhāratī P. 218.

maladies, happiness and long life and ensure the love of their husbands. Thus in a way these Vratas seem to have been a means of keeping the woman folk within the fold of family life by giving the various assurances of a happy existence here and hereafter.[1]

In these *Vratas* generally the *Devī's* clay-idol was obtained and was worshipped with vegetarian *Naivaidya* by the ladies, to procure either health of their children, a good husband, *Saubhāgya*, prosperity, happiness, and removal of the fear from all sorts of danger. These *Vratas* are full of festivities, followed with, dancing, music and marry-making by the children and ladies.[2] Thus the cult of *Śakti* was consisting of *Vratas* which is the characteristic of *Paurāṇika* religion.

Days:—For *Durgā* or Mothers, *Navamī* is said the proper *Tithī* for worship, दुर्गायै नवमी मता'[3] and *Caṇḍikā* or *Caṇḍī* is also worshipped on *Navamī*[4] while *Gaurī* and *Umā* are to be worshipped on *Tṛtīyā*.[5] The night of *Āśvina-Śukla-Aṣṭamī* is considered the very auspicious day for *Devī Pūjā* by the authors of the *Purāṇas*.[6] In this way the *Devī Vratas* are generally observed either on *Tṛtīyā* or *Navamī* days and especially of the bright fortnight.

*Vratas performed on Tṛtīya* :

1. *Madhūka Tṛtīyā Vratam* or *Gaurī Vratam* : (third date of *Phālguna*) : This Vrata is observed by the ladies specially unmarried girls to obtain a good husband.[7] *Gaurī* sitting in a chariot yoked by Godha-bull, is to be

1. Viśva Bandha Siddha Bhāratī. p. 221.
2. Bhaviṣya P., Uttara Parva, 16.1-16.
   Devī P. 23.12-17.
3. Ibid. I.122.13;27.
   Garuḍa P. 116/6.
4. Bhaviṣya P. IV.134.67.
5. Ibid. IV.134.67.
   Garuḍa P. 116.4.
6. Bhaviṣya P. II.2.8/26.
7. Ibid. 16.1-16.
   History of Dharm a Śāstra, Vol. V, pt I, p. 369.

worshipped with *Gandha*, *Dhūpa*, sandal, sweat meats, and golden ornaments. Then the *Brāhmaṇas* and the girls be fed & singing as well as dancing programmes should be arranged.

This is also performed on the third day of the month of *Vaiśākha*, *Bhādrapvda* and *Māgha* and is called *Saubhāgya-Karaṇa Vrata*.[1] Salt is forbidden during the *Vrata* and the donation of a bed with bedsheets etc. is praised verymuch.[2] This worship of the goddess in a *Madhuka* tree is also prescribed by *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*[3] on *Chaitra Śukla Tṛtīyā*.

2. *Gaurī Tṛtīyā Vratam* :

According to the *Padma Purāṇa* and the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*[4] it is observed on the third day of *Śrāvana*, *Vaiśākha* and *Mārgaśiras*, in respect of *Gaurī*,[5] and is called *Gaurivratam* or *Saubhāgya vratam*. While according to the *Nārada Purāṇa* it should be celebrated continuosly for 12 months, starting from *Chaitra*, and the *Purāṇa* gives 12 different names of *Gaurī*.[6] The *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* says that it is performed on *Mārgaśirsa Sankrānti* day.[7] Bathing of *Devī* with milk, honey, scented water and offering of the fruits and flower—is prescribed. *Pūjā* is performed and the *Kamala* flower having 16 leaves is to be inscribed.[8] Then feeding of the ladies and offering to them the silken clothes, gives the devotee health, prosperity, and sinless life etc. In the end of *Vrata* the beddings to the couples numbering 24 or 12 or eight or four—are offered. Guru is to be respected first of all and then others.[9] Flowers to be offered in the

1. Bhaviṣya I.21.1-30.
2. Ibid., Uttara Parva, 121.36-37.
3. Dbh. VIII.24.45-57; 36.
4. Padma P. I.22.65
   Matsya P. 62.4-5.
5. Ibid. I.20.51-52; 60-61.
   Matsya P. p. 100.7-8; 15-16
6. Nārada P. I.112.1-63; II.50.13-28.
7. Brh. V.P. IV.27.122-123.
8. Padma P. I.22.70-72; 78.
9. Ibid. I.22.90-100.98, 84.
   Matsya P. 62.4-39.

different months are : red flowers, blue lotuses, *Bandhujīva*, *Jāti flower*, yellow flowers, Kunda, *Sindhuvāra*, *Aśoka*, *Gandha-Pāṭala*, lotus, *Jalāmbuja*, *Mandar* or *Mālati* etc. starting from *Bhādrapada* to *Śrāvaṇa* respectively.[1] This Vrata is observed for 12 years by the ladies or girls. The accounts given in the Padma and Matsya Purāṇas are very much similar.[2]

3. *Umā Vratam*—also called *Guḍa Vrata* (*Tṛtīyā* of *Caitra* and *Māgha*). It is to be performed by every body with all the paraphernalia of the worship, to gain happiness in the life.[3] The *Padma Purāṇa* says that in this *Vrata*, *Guḍa* in a large quantity should be offered.[4] The *Vrata* is also called *Mahāvratam* and The *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* calls it as *Jai Durgā Vratam*—because the *Gopīs* worshipped in the month of *Māgha*, the goddess, called—*Jaya Durgā*.[5]

4. *Umā Maheśvara Vratam* :

1. It is observed by the ladies to obtain progeny,health love of their husband, and prosperity in the life.[6] It is Celeberated on *Mārga Śirsaśukla-Tṛtīyā*, the goddess *Lalitā* and *Śiva* both[7] are worshipped and *Dhūpa*, *Dipaka* sandal and *Naivaidya* should be offered to both. Having observed it for 12 months, one should give the images of *Śiva* and *Umā* to the *Brāhmins*.

1. Padma P. I.22.85-89.
   Matsya P. 62.22-25.
2. Nārada P. I.112.1-9.
   History of Dharma Sastra, Vol. V. pt. I, p. 296.
3. Bhaviṣya P. Uttar Parva. 121.154-156.
   Padma P. I.20.103-104.
4. Padma P. I.21.141-143.
   Matsya P. 100.53.
5. Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa IV.27.2-50.
6. Bhaviṣya P., Uttara Parva 23.1-28.
   History of Dharma Śāstra, Vol. V. pt. I, p. 277,
7. Ibid. Uttara Parva 23.12.

2- This *Vrata* is mentioned in the *Skanda Purāṇa* also.[1] It is performed on *Aṣṭamī* or *Caturthī* of *Caitra* and *Mārga Śīrṣa*. It is said here that *Śiva* and *Pārvatī* are to be offered *Pūjā* according to *Āgama Vidhān*.[2]

5. *Rambha Vratam or Rambha Tṛtīyā Vratam* :

It is celebrated continuously for full one year, on various *Tṛtīyās* of *Śukla Pakṣa* starting from *Mārga-śīrsa*. The names of the goddesses of different months are : *Pārvatī*, *Sudevī*, *Gaurī*, *Viśālākṣi*, *Śrīmukhi*, *Mādhavī*, *Śrī*; *Hara Tālī*, *Giriputrī*, *Padmodbhavā*, etc. only ten names are there. The worship is performed in the night with full paraphernalia of the *Pūjā-vidhāna*,[3] on *Āśvina Śukla-Tṛtīyā* it is celebrated with much festivity by the ladiesfor their *Saubhāgya* and beauty as well as to overpower their co-wives. *Devī* is offered all the *Upacāras*, then *Havan* takes place and people become happy in life[4] *Donations* may be given to a married *Brāhmaṇa* and they should be fed on *Caturthī*.

6. *Ārdrānandakarī Tṛtīyā Vratam* :

It is observed on any *Śukla Tṛtīyā* when *Āṣadha* constellation takes place. The goddess *Bhavānī* is worshipped by the ladies and different kinds of flowers, specially of white colour are offered to *Śiva* and *Bhavānī*. The Devotees get *Saubhāgya*, pleasure, and prosperity.[5]

There is mention of the names of *Devīs* in the *Mantras* to be recited during worship. These are[6] : *Vāsudevī*, *Śoka-vināśinī*, *Rambha*, *Āditi*, *Mādhavī*, *Ānandakarī*, *Utkandhini*, *Indrāṇi*, and *Viśvamukhī*. It is also described in the *Matsya Purāṇa* and the similarity between the two accounts goes to show that one has been borrowed from another.[7] It is mentioned also as one of the important *Vrata* of *Devī* in the *Padma Parāṇa*.[8] Here it is said that by the performance

1. Skanda p. Brahmottara Khanda, 18.25-70.
2. Agni Purāṇa 199.9.
3. Bhaviṣya P., Uttar Parva 24.1-36.
4. Ibid. 18.1-36.
5. Ibid. 27.1-27.
6. Ibid. 27.5.13.
7. Matsya P. 64.1-26.
8. Padma P. I.22.136-164.

of this *Vrata* a man may get even *Ātmānanda*.[1] Beddings and cots are also offered to the Brahmins for the pleasure of *Devī*.[2]

7. *Rasa-Kalyāṇinī Vratam* :

It is Observed either on *Bhādrapada Śukla* or *Vaiśākha Śukla Tṛtīyā* or *Marga Śirśa Śukla Tṛtīyā*. The Goddess *Lalitā* is to be worshipped with milk and honey, *Tila* and rice, and white flowers and fruits. *Gita-mangala Dhvani* is to be made. In the end feeding of the *Brahmins* and girls, donations of gold, and bedding and worship of Guru—all these are prescribed. Devotee gets his all his desires fulfilled.[3]

According to the *Matsya Purāṇa* it is celebrated for full one year starting from *Māgha Śukla Tṛtīyā*[4] and *Devī* is to be bathed with water, mixed with *Tila*, and honey. In this *Vrata* devotee has to abondon the use of salt in his food. After the completion of one year in the *Māgha* month—an image of *Devī* made of gold and two cows should be denoted for the pleasure of the goddess.[5]

One has to abandon the following articles in different months, salt, sugar, oil, honey, water, *Jirakam*, milk, curd, Ghee, honey, food grains, and sugar—starting from *Māgha* to *Mārgaśiras*.[6] So many names of the goddess are mentioned to be recited,[7] viz. *Lalitā*, *Śāntā*, *Śrī*, *Kamalā*, *Rudrāṇī*, *Śankarā*, *Viśvavasinī*, *Kānti*, *Mohanā*, *Amṛtā*, *Gaurī*, *Bhavānī*, and *Kāmadevī*.

8. *Harakāli Tṛtīyā Vratam* :

The goddess *Harakāli*, beloved of *Śiva* is to be praised on *Bhādra Pada Śukla Tṛtīya*, called as *Harakāli Tṛtīyā*. With full details of the worship and the constituents, mainly vegetarian and with full festivity including dance and music—she is to be worshipped. In the night, the *Jāgaraṇa* and the recitation of

1. Padma P. I.22.161.
2. Ibid. I22.160.
3. Bhaviṣya Purāṇa. Uttar Parva 26.1-41;
   Padma P. I.22.105.
   History of Dharma Sāstra Vol. V, pt. I., p. 390.
4. Matṣya Purāṇa 63.2.
5. Ibid. 63.23-25.
6. Ibid. 63.15-17.
7. Ibid. 63.4-11

the *Kāthā* should be arranged. Next morning *Devī* is to be immersed in the water with the recitation of Mantras and Then feeding of the *Brahmins* and the girls takes place.[1]

9. *Saubhāgyaśṭaka Tṛtīyā Vratam* :

The *Vrata* is observed for full one year starting from the *Tṛtīyā* of *Vasant Māsa* (*Caitra*). This is celebrated on the *Tṛtīyā* of every month and the goddess *Gaurī* or *Lalitā* is to be worshipped with her husband *Śiva*—and the idols of both be given to the *Brahmins* after completing the *Vrata* for one year. The beddings and other luxuries of the life may be donated. In this way it can be observed for 12 years or 8 or seven years and the devotee gets wealth, health, happiness, good partner in life and the final salvation.[2] Names of the 12 goddesses presiding over different months,[3] are mentioned here. This very *Vrata* in *Agni Purāṇa*, is called *Mūla-Gaurī Vrata*, having all the *Vidhāna* as prescribed in the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*[4] and *Padma Purāṇa* also calls it *Saubhāgya* Sayana Vratam and the eight articles are to be donated.[5]

*Lalitā Tṛtīyā Vratam* :

It is Observed in every month for one year starting from *Māgha Śukla*. Ladies clad in silk, worship the goddess with *Bilvas*, *Āmalaka*, scented flowers and *Dhūpa*, *Dīpaka*, and *Naivaidya* Donation is prescribed and night sleep is banned on that day. Next day also *Devī* is worshipped with all the upacharas.[6]

11. *Aviyoga Tṛtīyā Vratam* :

To obtain *Sukha* and good luck, ladies both married or widows observed it on *Mārga-Śiras-Śukla-Tṛtiyā*. It is also performed for one year and *Gaurī*, and *Śiva* both are worshipped. Performance ef *Havana*, feeding of the *Brāhmanas* and the

1. Bhavisya P.. Uttara Parva, 20.1-28.
   Nārada Purāṇa I.1123-36.
2. Bhaviṣya P. Uttara Parva 25.1-44.
   Matṣya P. 60.14-49.
3. Ibid 25.31-32.
4. Agni P. 178.1-28.
5. Padma P. I2.9.10-58.
6. Bhaviṣya P· Uttar Parva, 21.1-44.

masses, and *Pujā* are the main items of this *Vrata*. Starting from *Kārtika* it comes to an end in the month of *Mārgaśiras*.[1]

Names of the goddesses and gods to be worshipped.[2]

1. *Gaurī—Śiva—Mārgaśiras*
2. *Pārvati—Giriśa—Pausha*
3. *Bhavānī—Bhava—Māgha*
4. *Umā—Mahādeva—Phālguna*
5. *Lalitā—Śankara—Caitra*
6. *Lolanetrā—Sthāṇu—Vaiśākha*
7. *Ekvirā—Vireśvara—Jyeṣṭha*
8. *Śakti—Paśupatinatha—Āṣāḍha*
9. *Sutā—Śrī Kaṇṭha—Śrāvaṇa*
10. *Durgā—Bhima—Bhādrapada*
11. *Durgā—Śiva—Āśvina*
12. *Śivā—Iśāna—Kārtika*

12. *Anantara Tṛtiya Vratam* :

It is observed on all the *Tṛtiyas* of *Kṛṣṇa Pakṣa* and *Śukla Pakṣa* of every month. Though it is said that it banifits everybody still for, the ladies it is more helpful,[3] and for different months different things are prescribed for *Naivaidya*.

1. *Mārgaśiras*—coconut
2. *Pauṣa*—Sweatmeats
3: *Māgha—Bilva*
4. *Phālguna—Puris*
5. *Chaitra—Piṣta*
6. *Vaiśākha—Srī khaṇḍa*
7. *Jyeṣṭha—Mangoes*
8. *Āṣādha—Sattu*
9. *Śrāvana—Godhūma*
10. *Bhādrapada—Kulmāṣa*
11. *Āśvina—Khandapupa*
12. *Kārtika—Khira*

1. Bhaviṣya P. Uttar Parva 22.1-36.
2. Ibid. 22.12-18.
3. Ibid. 29.1-77.

Performance of *Havana*, fast, worship, recitation of *Nāma*, giving of alms, offering of clothes, ornaments, and even cosmetics, *Jāgaraṇa* in the night and feeding of married *Brāmin* couples and girls—are important constituents of this vrata. Thus it is very costly affair.

13. *Caitra-Bhādrapada-Māgha Tṛtīyā Vratam* :

It is Observed by the ladies or the girls on the days of *Śukla Tṛtīyā* of these three months. A *Maṇḍapa* should be constructed, and having taken bath, wearing good cloths one must go to Devī temple.[1] This worship of *Gaurī* is prescribed with various kinds of flowers, fruits, sweat-meats, edibles, and cosmeties so on. In the night time, after every three hours—taking of bath and worship of Devi with *Homa* etc. is prescribcd.[2] A function should be arranged in the night, dancing and singing must go on—as it pleases very much the goddess and the god *Śiva*.[3] Night is spent in gay mood in the company of the relatives, and the neighbours. Next day, the goddess is worshipped and donations are given to the *Brāhmiṇs*, ladies and food is served to all of them present there. This worship is performed in a temple and then the *Bhaktas* come to their own houses.[4]

14. *Gaurī Vratam* :

On *Bhādrapada Kṛṣṇa Tṛtīyā*, *Gaurī* is worshipped in *Pañcapiṅdika* form. Offering of *Dhūpa*, *Dīpa*, camphor, flowers, sweat-meats to the goddess, feeding of the *Brāhmins* and the devotees of *Devī* is praised, and it gives good luck and wealth.[5]

15. *Manorath Tṛtīyā Vratam* :

The *Caitra Śukla Tṛtīyā* is an auspicious day for the worship of *Viśvabhujā Devī* to obtain one's desires.[6] Goddess is having 20 hands, and performance of *Homa*, worship and

1. Bhaviṣyā P. Uttar Parva, 28.15-16.
2. Ibid. 28.1-20.
3. Ibid. 28.29.
4. Ibid. 28-1-58.
5. Skanda P. 6.168;25-77.
6. Ibid. IV-2.80.1-86.

offering of flowers and *Naivaidya* is made. In the end having observed it for one year on all the *Tṛtīyās*, *Paryaṅka* with all the house-hold luxurious things is given to *Ācārya* and Twelve girls are to be fed. It is said that whatever the desire may be, it is fulfilled. This *Vrata* generally is performed in the night.

16. *Mangala Gaurī Vratam* :

On *Caitra Śukla Tṛtīyā*, Mangala Gaurī is worshipped, and *Homa*, worship, feeding of girls, are performed.[1]

17. *Mahākāli Vratam* :[2]

Generally on the night of *Kṛṣṇa Aṣṭhamī*, *Mahākāli* is worshipped with the offering of *Bali*. In the month of *Āśvina* on the 9th day also she is worshipped. Night awakening is said to be meritorious one.

18. *Gaurī Vratam* :

This *Vrata* is observed on the day of *Māgha Śukla Caturthī* when *Gaurī* is worshipped. The ladies and gents worship her by offering *Kunda* flowers, red flowers, *Bali* and sweat-meats, milk, milk preparations and salty food preparations. Specially the ladies and the Brahmins are to be respected and food may be serve.. to all the relatives and friends present there. This is to be celebrated every year by those who want prosperity and happiness in the life.

This *Vrata* may be called as *Ḍhunḍhi Vratam* or *Kunḍa Vratam* or *Śānti Vrata* and *Lalitā Vrata* also. The usual steps of worship like bathing of the deity, donations, recitation of the names of the deity, *Havan* etc. are to be performed.[3]

19. *Lalitikā Ṣaṣthī Vratam* :

On the 6th day of bright fortnight of *Bhādrapada*, a lady should worship the goddess *Lalitikā*—a benign form of *Durgā*—with flowers, rice, *Naivaidya*, etc. In the night she should remain awakened and arrangements should be made for musical concert, dancing by the courtesans, or by the house hold ladies *Kīrtan* may be performed. Next day Brahmins and the Virgin

1. Skanda P IV.1;49,55-91.
2. Ibid. 7.130.1-12.
3. Nārada Purāṇa I,113.80-86.

girls are to be fed and *Dakśinā* should be given. He or she receives all *Saubhāgya* and happiness in the life by performing this *Vrata*.[1] In the *Nārada Purāṇa* this *Saṣṭhi* is called *Chandan Saṣṭhi* and *Lalitā* is to be worshipped.[2] According to the *Nārada Purāṇa* this is also observed on *Kṛṣṇa Saṣṭhi* and *Vrata* is called *Lalitā Vratam*.[3]

20. *Kātyāyani Saṣṭi Vratam* :

It is observed on *Śukla Saṣṭhi* of *Āśvin* month[4] and *Devī Kātyāyani* is to be worshipped with auspitious things and, *Gandha* etc. Some say that *Durgā* is to be worshipped,[5] and Her image may be made of sand and in the end of *Vrata* the image may be thrown into the river. The ladies of the Brāhmin family and girls are to be fed and respected with clothings and ornaments. By performing this a girl can obtain a good husband.

21. *Mahāṣtmi Vratam* :

1. According to the *Nārada Purāṇa*, *Mahāṣṭamī* is *Vaiśākha Śukla Aṣṭami*. The goddess *Aparājitā* is to be bathed and *Gandha*, *Kum Kum* etc. are offered, feeding of the girls and *Pāraṇa* is on *Navamī*: the devotee gets all his desires fulfiled.[6]

2. On *Jyeṣṭha-Śukla-Aṣṭamī*—Devī is worshipped.[7]

3. On *Āṣādha Śukla Aṣṭamī*—worship of Devī with *Pūjan-sāmagrī*.[8]

4. On *Śrāvaṇa Śukla Aṣṭami*—offering of sugar and milk.[9]

5. On *Māgha Kṛṣṇa Aṣṭamī*—*Bhadra Kālī* is worshipped[10]

1. Bhaviṣya P., Uttar Pārva 41.1-81.
2. Nārada P. I.115.29-30.
   Gupta (B.A.), Hindu Holidays and Ceremonials, p. 78-82.
3. Nārada P. I.115.8-15.
4. Ibid. I.115.34-37.
5. Gupta (B.A.), Hindu Holidays and Ceremonials, p. 75.
0. Nārada P· 1.117,4-7.
7. Ibid. 1.117.8-9.
8. Ibid. I.117.9-12.
9. Ibid. I.117.13-14.
10. Ibid· I.118,90.

6. On *Māgha Śukla Aṣṭaumī*—worship of ***Devī*** **for the** sake of progeny.[1]

7. On *Phālguna Kṛṣṇa Aṣṭami*—worship of ***Bhima-Devī.***[2]

8. On *Phālguṇa Śukla Aṣṭamī*—worship of ***Śiva*** **and** ***Śivā*** both,[3] as well as the worship of *Śhitala* with fried foods.[4]

10. On all the *Aṣṭamīs* of the year—*Śiva* **and** ***Sivā*** are worshipped.[5]

22. *Dhvaja Navamī Vratam* :

On the day of *Śukla Navamī* of *Pauṣa*, the goddess *Kṛṣṇā*, the sister of *Kṛṣṇa* is worshipped. In this *Vrata* special feat is to install banners (*Dhvaja*) before the goddess, and in the *Devī* temple *Devī* is to be offered the flowers, *Gandha, Dhūpa* etc. and offer of the *Bali*, full of meat, blood, wine and so on. Then feeding of the girls and *Kṣamāpaṇa* in the end, is performed. Who ever worships *Devī* with banners, he becomes free from all sorts of troubles and fears and is protected by the goddess.

23. *Ulkā Navamī Vrata* :

It is supposed to be performed on the day on which *Devī* had killed demon *Mahiṣa.* The day falls in the month of *Āśvina* in *Śukla Pakṣa*, and *Devī* is to be worshipped with flowers and incense. Girls are fed on this day and gifts of clothes and ornaments are given to them.[7]

24. *Vir Navamī Vratam or Damanaka Navamī Vratam* :

The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* says that *Devī* should be worshipped on *Caitra Śukla Navamī* called *Vir Navamī* or *Damnaka Navamī.* On this day she is offered the flowers or garlands of Damnaka flowers. Then a devotee gets long age, health and prosperity as well as the power of destruction or subdueing his enemies.[8]

1. Narada P. I.118.91.
2. Ibid. 1.118.92.
3. Ibid. I.11g.93.
4. Ibid. I.118.94-98.
5. Ibid. I.118.99.
6. Bhaviṣya P., Uttara Parva, 61.46-57.
7. Agrawal (V. S.), Matsya Purāṇa, a Study, p. 156.
8. Garuḍa Purāṇa, 135/2, 5.

25. *Śaurya Vratam* :

This *Vrata* is mentioned in the *Varāha Purāṇa* and is celebrated by the kings for the victory in the battles. In the month of *Āśvina* a devotee must make a mind to observe a *Vrata* on *Śukla Saptamī* and observe fast on *Aṣṭamī* and on *Navamī*, worship the goddess Durgā, & food should be offered to the Brāhmins. Having performed in this way for a year—at the end he must respect the girls with clothings, gold and food. In this way a devotee will be able, by the grace of the goddess, to regain even his lost kingdom and the cause of fear will be removed.[1]

26. *Navamī Vratam* :

The *Viṣṇu Dharmottara Purāṇa* says that it is observed on all the *Śukla Navamīs* of the year in respect of *Bhadra Kālī*, starting from *Kārtika*. Every month the goddess is worshipped with *Gandha*, garland, *Dhūpa*, *Dīpa* and *Praśāda*. After one year, *Brāhmins* are to be fed, and clothings are given to them. The devotees become free of all sorts of troubles and fears caused by disease, theives, imprisonment, fire, decoits and the courts and obtain progeny, wealth, good wife and so on.[2]

27. *Kokilā Vratam* :

This *Vrata* is to be observed by the ladies on the last day (*Pūrnimā*) of *Śrāvana*. Here the *Kokilā* is identified with the Goddess *Gaurī* or *Pārvatī*, who is to be worshipped with full devotion. Then the donations were given to the *Brāhmins*, the ladies were to be fed and *Dakśiṇā* given to them. The Ladies get good fate, and prosperity for the whole life.[3]

28. *Bhūtamātā Utsava* :

The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* gives a story about the origin of *Bhūtamātā*. Here Kṛṣṇa says that she is originated from the body of *Pārvati* while she was busy in conversation with Śiva.[4] This goddess looks after the welfare of the children and is

1. Varāha Purāṇa. 64.2-6.
2. Viṣṇu Dharmottar Purāṇa. III.178.1-5.
3. Nārada P. I.124.19-25.
4. Bhaviṣya Purāṇa 134.4-18.

worshipped all over India under different names, varying due to different actions, time, and place.[1] At the time of composition of this *Purāṇa*, the worship of *Bhūtamātā* was very popular and the people in the city as well as in the villages—celebrated a festival to respect her, with great enthusiasm.[2] This goddess, lives under an old tree and is worshipped by the people with water, flowers, lamps, food preparations (*Pūda*, *Lāpsi*) etc. She gives to her devotees, progeny, cattles, good health and protectis the babies in the house from the *Śākins*, the demons and the *Grahas* etc.[3]

29. *Vijayā Vratam* :

It is performed on the *Pūrnimā* of *Śrāvaṇa*,[4] for begetting the children, good fame, prosperity and health in the life, but it is specially meant for acquiring the kingdom, lost or new one. The Goddess may be worshipped in an image made of either gold, and silver, or sword. After performing *Havana*, and worship, *Naivaidya*, and clothings are offered. Donations to the priest, teacher, *Brāhmins*, and girls, according to one's own capacity and liking are said to be meritorious.[5]

30. *Pada Vratam* :

By the performance of *Pada Vrata* the goddess *Nandā*, is pleased. She is worshipped on an altar, an image, and Devī's foot-wear. The footwear made of gold etc. may be worshipped with mango-leaves, *Dūrvā*-grass, and *Bilva* leaves. Then donations and food should be offered to the girls and the devotees of Devī and in the end a Person goes to *Devī Loka*. It was performed by *Prajāpati*, *Vaśiṣṭha*, and *Kaśyapa* etc.[6]

A study of these *Vratas* brings in light the following points about the cult of Śakti prevalent in the age of the *Purāṇas* :

1. Bhaviṣya Purāṇa 136.25.
2. Ibid. 136 1.
3. Ibid. 136.20-23.
4. Devi P. 100,4-15; 26.
5. Ibid. 102.10-13.
6. Ibid. 102.14-

1. That the Cult of *Śakti* was prevalent among the masses as a means to procure worldly luxuries and necessities —like progeny, good health, happiness, charming personality and last of all protection of the children.[1]

2. Generally these were the ladies who followed it, to procure good husband, to have good relations with their husbands, to subdue the co-wives, and to procure progeny and prosperity.[2]

3. It was the only cult which assured its devotees to protect from all the calamities, like fire, flood, draught, epics (*Mahāmārīs*), revolt in the states, enemy, and court-punishments, dense forest, dacoits and thieves etc.[3]

4. Except the *Durgā Pūjā* performed on *Āśvina Śukla Navamī* and by the kings, the worship mostly was performed by the Right hand path. The steps *Bali*, and *Bhairavī Cakra* etc. were not performed, rather those were condemned in the *Purāṇas* and the aims to be achieved were also pertaining generally to the welfare side in the life. The *Saumya* forms of the goddess were more popular among the masses and some of these were worshipped as *Grāma deities.*

5. The Śaktism of the Purāṇas was concerned more with the personel life of its sectries and cared most with their protection in the life, homo-genity in the family and social relations, high-standards of living, observance of good and ethical behaviour and last of all freedom from all the dangers; and thus making them bold in the life.

Thus Śaktism was more or less, a social religion rather than an individual cult. It believes in the reality of the universe, and teaches to have a faith and devotion towards the all loving mother-goddess.[4]

1. Devī P. 93.261-264;
   Davī Bhāgvata III.25.43-46 XII.9.59-63.
2. Ibid.
3. Vāyū P. 9.95-96. Devi Bh. Mahatmya 3.41-47, 5.90-91.
4. Devī Mahatmya 13.36, 37; MurtiRahasya V. 24.

## CHAPTER VI

# THE MANIFESTATIONS OF ŚAKTI AND THE ŚAKTI PĪṬHAS IN THE PURĀṆAS

*Theory of incarnation* :

Like *Vaiṣṇavism*, the *Paurāṇika Śaktism* advocates the popular theory of incarnation. This theory presupposes the principles of monothism or the existence of one god, and the other deities are considered incarnations of the same.[1] According to the *Purāṇas*, *Parā Śakti* descends on earth, to help goods in the maintenance of law and order in the world, for the development and welfare of the masses and the Brahmins,[2] to destroy the demons—(ill natured powerful politicians in the world), who harrass others for their own interest or even without interest, to protect the devotees from some danger or calamity,[3] and last of all to establish the importance of her devotees in the society.[4] She also promotes the healthy-relations and atmosphere in the world[5] and sometimes assists *Viṣṇu* or *Śiva*[6] in their fights against the demons.

***Incarnations** as **described in** the **Skanda Purāṇa*** :

1. *Pārvatī* or *Umā* : born of *Himavān* and *Menakā* and was married to *Śiva*.[7]
2. *Viśva-bhujā* : she grants boons to the devotees.[8]

1. Skanda P. 6.145.5-7.
   Devī Māhātmya 1.66.
   Śiva P. 5.50.14.
   Skanda P. 3.17.20; 3.1.18.37.7.1.16.22;
   Devī P. 42.4.
2. Skanda P. I.2.65.102-104; 6.145.7-12. and so on.
3. Ibid. 7. Arbuda Khanda 22.28; 3.1.8.29.
   Devī Māhātmya P. XII.36.
4. Skanda P. 7. Arbuda Khaṇḍa 22.28.
5. Ibid. 22.65-66; 60.
6. Ibid. I.2.65 58; I.2.65.85.
7. Ibid. 6.168.34-38.
8. Ibid. IV.2.80.6-8.

3. *Śrīmātā* : she killed demons *Bāskali* and *Kāla Yavana* and protected the gods.[1]
4. *Māṭangī* : She destryed demon *Karṇāṭa* and emerged out of the lustre of the goddess *Śrīmātā*.[2]
5. *Bhūtamātā* : she restores health of the children.[3]
6. *Subhadrā* : sister of *Kṛṣṇa*, she is called *Viṣṇupriyā*.[4]
7. *Ekānaṁsā* : She helped *Pārvatī* in the fight against demons.[5]
8. *Durgā* : She killed demon Durga.[6]
9. *Keleśwarī* : She killed demon *Lohana* and *Andhāsura*.[7]
10. *Kātyāyanī* : She Destroyed demons *Mahiṣā*.[8]
11. *Cāmuṇḍā* : killed *Śumbhā* and *Niśumbha*.[9]
12. There is mention of about 16 incarnations of the goddess for the destruction of the demon *Durga*.[10]
13. Another group of 16 different incarnations in different *Kalpas*,[11] has been refered.
14. *Satī* was born as daughter of *Dakṣa* prajapati at the request of Brahmā.[12]

The Purāṇas mention various important incarnations of *Śakti*. viz.—*Kālī*, *Ambikā*, *Vindhyavāsinī*, *Saraswatī* or *Śāradā*, *Lalitā*, *Gaurī*, *Śivadūtī*, *Tripura Bhairavī*, *Bhuvaneśvarī*, *Mātangī*, *Mīnakṣī*, *Yoganidrā* or *Yogamāyā*, *Sarvamangalā* and others. Here is a brief description of these goddesses in the following pages.

*Division on the basis of mental planes* :

Broadly speaking a *Sādhaka* may contemplate on the *Sātvika* (tranquil or peaceful) form of the deity, if the object derived by him is *Sātvika*. Similarly the form is *Rājasa* (imbued with grandeur) or *Tamasa* (terrific) if the object desired by

1. Skanda P. Arbuda Khaṇḍa 22.1-9; Ibid, 6.145.710.
2. Ibid. II. 1.18.3-4;57-59
3. Ibid. 7,163.11-16; 75-79.
4. Ibid. II.2.30.55-61.
5. Ibid. Avanti Khaṇḍa 19.1-33.
6. Ibid. 1.2.65.103-105; IV.2.72.60-61.
7. Ibid. I.2.65.102; 6.145.11.
8. Ibid 6.145.7-8.
9. Ibid. 6.145.9.
10. Ibid. 7.6.31-33.
11. Ibid. 4.2.72.3-73.
12. Ibīd. 7.6.25-30.

the *Sīdhaka* is *Rājasa* (imbued with passion or desire) or *Tāmasika* (malignant).[1] Generally the '*Sātvika*' form of a deity is described as having two arms and is a sitting posture, the *Rājasa* deity as having four arms and being in standing posture, and the *Tāmasa* as having many arms and actually in such action as should be in consonance with the object desired by the *Sādhaka*. In *Sāṭvika Dhyāna* the colour of the deity is white, in *Rājasa* red and sometime yellow, and in *Tāmasa* dark blue or black[2]. *Sātvika* objects are Peace, knowledge, selfless devotion, and propitiation of the deity; Prosperity, happiness, and other worldly objects imbued with passion or desire are *Rājasa* objects; and adversely affecting an enemy etc. are *Tāmasa* or malignant objects.[3]

Further, some deities are by their nature *Sātvika*, some are *Rājas* and some are *Tāmasa* and some have all the three qualities.[4] The *Mahālakṣmī* and *Śrī Ambikā* are possessed of all the three qualities. A *Sādhaka* has to make his selection accordingly. This is the reason why special deties are recommended for worship.[5] This accounts for variation in the *Svarupā* or forms of a deity. We think that the deciding factor in ascertaining the nature of a particular deity or its image is the actual impression created on the mind of a *Sādhaka*.

The Goddess who is unmanifested, takes the forms of *Mahālakṣmī*, *Mahāsaraswatī* and *Mahākālī* respecting the *Rājas*, the *Satvika* and the *Tāmasa* attributes of *Prakṛti*. She is known otherwise also i.e at the time of creation, she is *Mahākālī* exercising control over *Brahmā* and bringing the world into existence, as giver of wealth she is *Lakṣmī*, and as destroyer of wealth she is *Alakṣmī* or *Jyeṣṭhā Devī*, and so on.

1. Bṛhajjyotishārṇava—Śrī Batuk Bhairava Upāsanā—Adhyāya I 24 ' V. 24-26.
2. Saptaśati Prādhānika Rahasya, Tāmasā—V. 7-13, Sātvika, V.14-16.
3. Ibid V. 1-31.
4. Saptaśatī Vaikṛtika Rahasa. 1.1.18.
5. Bhāgavata II 3.2-9, 6 7,

*Grouping of Devīs* :

According to *Devī Purāṇa*, *Devī* has got 60 manifestations, and these sixty forms have been divided into three groups called *Sātvika*, *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika* respectively.[1]

Names are as follows :

1. Twenty *Sātvika* forms constituting the first grade are—*Mangalā, Vijayā, Bhadrā, Śivā, Śānti, Dhṛti, Kṣamā, Ṛddhi, Vṛddhi, Unnati, Siddhi, Tuṣṭi, Puṣṭi, Śrī, Umā, Dīpti, Kānti, Yaśā, Lakṣmī* and *Īśwarī*[2]

2. Twenty *Rājasa* forms constituting the second grade are[3]:—*Brāhmī, Jayāvatī, Śakti, Ajitā, Aparājitā, Jayantī, Mānasī, Māyā, Diti, Śvetā, Vimohini, Śaranyā, Kauśikī, Gaurī, Vimalā, Rati, Lālasā, Arundhati, Kriyā* and *Durgā.*

3. Twenty *Tāmasa* forms constituting the third grade are[4] :—*Kālī, Raudrī, Kāpālī, Ghanṭakarṇā, Mayūrikā, Bahūrupā, Sarupā, Trinetra, Ripuhā, Ambikā, Maheśwarī, Kumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Ghoṣā, Karālī,, Vikatā, Aditi* and *Charchikā.*

Out of these 60 goddesses mentioned in *Devī Purāṇa* only 22 are the important goddesses namely *Durgā, Gaurī* etc. The rest 38 goddesses viz. *Śānti, Dhṛti, Kṣamā, Ṛddhi, Vṛddhi, Unnati, Siddhi, Tuṣṭi, Puṣṭi, Śrī, Dīpti, Kānti,* and *Yaśā* of the first grade, *Jayāvatī, Jayantī, Mānasī, Diti, Śvetā, Vimohinī, Śaranyā, Vimalā, Rati, Lālasā, Arundhati,* and *Kriyā* of the second grade, *Kapālī, Ghanṭakarṇā, Mayūrikā, Bahūrupā, Surūpa, Ripūhā, Trinetrā, Surapūjitā, Vaivaśvatī, Ghorā, Karālī, Vikatā,* and *Aditi*—of the third grade, are not independent goddesses and these may be incorporated in the important 22 goddesses.

*Nine Durgas* :

The most important incarnation of the Mother goddess is that of the *Nine Durgās*. Various lists have been given with regard to the names of the goddesses.

1. Devī P. 50.5.
2. Ibid. 50.10-11.
3. Ibid. 50.12-14.
4. Ibid. 50.15-17.

According to *Devī Purāṇa*, the number nine, of *Durgās* is there to match the number of nine *Grahas*.[1] The Bhaviṣya also Purāṇa mentions nine *Durgās*.[2] Their names are :—1. *Mahālakṣmī*, 2. *Nandā* or *Ānandā*, 3. *Kshemankari*, 4. *Śivadūtī*, 5. *Mahārundā*, 6. *Bhrāmarī*, 7. *Sarva maṅgalā*, (*Chandra-maṇḍalā*), 8. *Revatī*, 9[3] and *Hara Siddhi*.

According to *Devī Kavacha*, the names of *Durgās* are :[3]

1, *Śailaputrī*, 2. *Brahmachāriṇī*, 3. *Chandra Ghaṇṭā*, 4. *Kūṣmāṇḍā*, 5. *Skandamātā*, 6. *Kātyāyanī*, 7. *Kālarātrī*, 8. *Mahāgaurī*' 9. and *Siddhi-dātrī*.

The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* gives a detailed description of *Navadurgās*.

1. *Mahālakṣmī* : She is very beautiful goddess adorned with costly and shining clothes and success incarnate.[4]

2. *Nandā* : She is Sitting in a posture called *Padmāsana*, having lotus[5] like face and hands, and having *Kamaṇḍlu* in her hand. She removes the troubles of the devotees. She is very much similar to the description of the goddess *Brāhmī*.

3. *Kṣemankarī* : having a fearful face, making noise, possessing a body not at all charming—and naked is the goddess *Kṣemaṅkarī* i.e. goddess of fearful aspect.[6]

4. *Śivadūtī* . She is the power of *Śiva*, and is assigned with all the activities of *Śiva*.[7]

5. *Mahātuṇḍā* : She always laughs freely, and is wearing surpents in her ears as ear-rings.[9]

6. *Bhrāmarī* : She is dancing in a musical performance and is a Destructor of demons.[9]

1. Devī . 50 22.
2. Bhaviṣya P. Uttara Parva 61.1-21.
   Devī P. 118 4.
3. Devī Kavaca 3-5.
4. Bhaviṣya P. Uttara Parva, 61,13.
5. Ibid. 61.14.
6. Ibid. 61.15.
7. Op. cit., 61.16.
8. Op. cit., 61.17.
9. Op. cit., 61.18 .

7. *Chandramaṇḍalā* : It is her bgnign form, having a smiling face, mounting on a lion, sitting in meditating pose and having four hands.[1]

8. *Revatī* : She is also of benign aspect—having *Triśūla* in her hand, various forms and destroying thc demons.[2]

9. *Harsiddhi* : She moves all over the world especially in cemetry grounds, followed by the *Yoginī's* and worshipped by the Godsand she is called *Harsiddhi.*[3]

*Eight forms of Deoī* :

As *Śiva* has been said having eight forms[4], similarly *Devī*, wife of *Śiva* is also having the eight forms, or manifestations of her terrible forms. In the *Antarvedī Tīrtha* these eight forms are called as :[5]

1. *Maṅgalā.*
2. *Vimalā*—in the west.
3. *Sārvamaṅgalā*—on the back of *Saukhya-tirtha.*
4. *Ālambā*—in the north.
5. *Kālarātrī*—in the south.
6. *Marichikā*—in the east.
7. *Chaṇḍarūpā*—after *Kālarātri.*
8. *Rudrāṇī.*

These eight forms of *Śakti* are said to be pervaded in all the directions in order to show the prevalence of the Śakti cult.[6]

*Vidyās* :

*Devī Purāṇa* especially mentions only eight *Vidyās* while the number of *Vidyās* said to be, is ten in the *Tantras.*[7] Generally these *Vidyās* are the various goddesses for child welfare and these may be multiplied in hundreds.[8] They are having the bull, the lion, the elephant, the peacock, the swan, the serpent, the *Garuḍa*, and *Ṛkṣarāja* as their vehicles.[9]

1. Bhavisya P. uttara Parva 61.19.
2. Op. cit.. 61.20.
3. Op. cit., 61.21.
4. Śākuntalam I.1; Skanda P. II.2.4.47.
5. Skanda P, II.2 4.42-47.
6. Ibid. II.2 4 42.
7. Devī. P.39.140.
8. Ibid. 39.148; 142.
9. Ibid. 39.140-41,

The *Śiva Purāṇa* mentions the origin of the ten *Mahāvidyās* from the body of *Devī*. Their names are *Kālī, Tārā, Chhinnamastā, Śrīvidyā, Bhuvaneśvarī*, Bhairavī, *Bagalā, Dhūmrā, Tripurasundarī* and *Mātangi*. All these are having weapons in their hands,[1] and should be worshipped and placed inside the city, or the palace.[2] These are worshipped by the kings and the ladies according to the Right hand path. The *Pulindas*, the *Śabaras*, Society girls, and ladies of the cow-herds, the *tungas*, *hūṇas* and the *khasas* worship her according to the rules of *Vāma Mārga*.[3]

*The Mothers* :

The institution of the Mothers (*Mātṛs*, *Mātṛkās* or *Mahāmātṛs*) is very interesting. These represent the embodied energy and prowess of the seven famous gods, their male counterparts as their very names indicate. The number of the mothers enumerated is seven, *Kaumārī*, *Vaiṣṇavī*, *Vārāhī*, and *Aindrī* are almost common to all the lists. The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* designates the seventh as *Nārasīnhī*, *Ksīrasvamin* and the *Suprabhedāgama*, include *Vāmanī*, *Vaināyakī*, *Mahālakṣmī*, and *Caṇḍika* respectively.[4] The *Varāha Purāṇa* describes the eight mothers as : *Yogīśvarī*, *Maheśvarī*, *Vaiṣṇavī*, *Brāmhī-Svāyambhu*, *Kaumārī*, *Indrajā*, *Yamadanḍaharī*, *Anasūyā*, and *Vārāhī*.[5] The *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* adds *Mahālakṣmī* as the eighth mother.[6] Some lists give nine names : *Narāsimhī*, *Camuṇḍā*, *Vārāhī*, *Vāruṇī*, *Lakṣmī*, *Kālī*, *Kapālī*, *Kurukullā*, and *Indrāṇī*.[7]

1. Śiva P. 5.50.28-29.
   See also Monier Williams, Brāhmanism and Hinduism, p. 117.
2. Devī P. 30. 167-68.
3. Ibid. 39.142-44.
4. Mārkaṇḍeya P. 88.11-20.
   Devī P. 37.85-98.
   Monier Williams, Op. cit., p. 187-188.
   Sukla (D.N.) Vāstu Shastra Vol. II, P. 322.
5. Varāha P; ch. 26.
6. Brahmāṇḍa P. II.44.11-12.
   W. Crooke—The popular religion and folklore of Northern India, Vol. I, p. 112.
7. Skanda P. Kaumārikā Khaṇḍa 66.53-54.

The *Garuda Purāṇa* mentions the names of *Sapta Mātṛkas* viz. *Maheśwarī*, *Kaumārī*, *Vārāhī*, *Aindrī*, *Nāra Siṁhī*, *Chamuṇḍā* and *Vaiṣṇavī* along with several other minor goddesses.[1] It differs from the list given in Devī Māhātmya[2], but in another list it includes the name of *Cāmuṇḍā* as 8th Mother. The *Matsya Purāṇa* also in the closing verses mentions the seven *Mātṛkas*, who along with *Ardha-nārīśvara Śiva* are to be installed at the same place.[3] According to Devi Purāṇa the mothers are nine and the name ruru-ghatini is substituted for Chamnda,[4] included in the Garuda Purāṇa also. *Devī Purāṇa* says that these are meant for the welfare of all the beings; animate and inanimate and these are very kind like the human mothers, specially for the children.[5]

The number of the Divine Mothers seems to have been originally eight representing the counterparts of the eight forms of *Śiva*. But later on, as the number seven became popular among the Brahmins, as a pious number, the original number was changed into seven.

The *Purāṇas* give various stories with regard to the birth of the *Mātṛkas*. The *Suprabhedāgama* relates that the seven *Mātṛkas* were created by *Brahmā* for the purpose of killing *Nirta*.[6] The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* narrates that these were born from *Brahmā*, *Viśṇu*, *Śiva*, *Skanda*, and *Indra*, just at the time of killing the demons *Śumbha* and *Niśumbha*, and *Caṇḍa* and *Muṇḍa*.[7] The *Purāṇas* describe them in detail, saying that these are the counterparts of the gods namely *Indra*, *Viṣṇu*, *Varāha*, *Brahmā*, *Narasingh*, *Maheśvara*, and *Kumāra*. All these are having the feminine forms of these gods. The *vāhanas*, the *dress*, *ornaments*, weapons are similar to their counterpart deities.[8]

1. Garuḍa P. English trans. by M.M. Dutt., p. 92.
   for other goddesses see p. 380-382.
   Garuḍa P. 134.3, 4,6.
2. Devī Māhātmya VIII.15-21.
   Garuḍa P. 134.3,4.
3. Matsya P. 178.89.
4. Devī P. 118.4.
5. Ibid. 1.52.
6. Rao, Gopinatha T., Elements of Hindu Iconography, p. 382-383.
7. Devī Māhātmya VIII. 13-23.
8. Ibid.

*Yoginīs* :

The *Yoginīs* are the folk-goddesses. In *Skanda Purāṇa* we find two different lists of the names of the *Yoginīs*,[1] One consisting 48 names while other is having 64 names. These are all belonging to the fearful forms of *Devī* and these goddesses are to be worshipped with Bali, in Autumn *Navarātra* and *Yātrā* is also to be arranged for *Devī*. One becomes free from the fear of the *Bhūtas*, *Piśāchas*, and the demons.

These yogīnis are sometimes represented as eight fairies or sorceresses created by *Durgā* and sometimes these are as mere forms of that Goddess, sixty or sixty-five in number, and capable of being multiplied to the number of ten millions.[2] The *Skanda Purāṇa* describes that there are as many *Yoginīs* as there are *Gotras* (one for each *Goṭra*). Some of these are also designated as *Kuladevatas*, viz. : *Śrī-Mātā*, *Tāranī*, *Āśāpurī*, *Gotrapā*, *Icehārtināsinī*, *Pippalī*, *Vikāravāsā*, *Jaganmātā*, *Mahāmātā*, *Siddhā*, *Bhattārikā*, *Karambā*, *Vikārā*, *Mithā Suparṇā*, *Vasujā*, *Mātangī*, *Mahādevī*, *Vāṇī*, *Mukuteśvarī*, *Bhadrā*, *Mahāśakti*, *Saṁhārī*, *Mahā balā* and *Cāmuṇḍā*.[3]

*Incarnations related with Viṣṇu* :

There are some incarnations of *Śakti*, related to *Viṣṇu*. Sometimes she incarnated herself to help him or as a consort of his incarnation. All these are benign goddesses, working for the welfare of the world.

*Vaiṣṇavī* :

She is the supreme goddess of red colour, wearing red apparel and decorated with red ornaments, mounting on the *Garuḍa* and possessed of Her wonderful *Vaiṣṇavī* powers and face, fully blossomed like the budding of a lotus flower.[4] She is differently described in *Devī Purāṇa*. She is ever full, the world-mother *Ambikā*, not expressed in words, the *Vaiṣṇavī Śakti* is capable to bestow all wealth and property, and

1. Skanda P. 7.116.54-61.4.1.45.33-52.
2. Monier Williams, op. cit., p. 189.
3. Skanda P., Brahma Khaṇḍa, Dharmāraṇya Māhātmya 9.196.
4. Dbh. III 17.42-43.
   Devī P. 37.74.

enchants the whole universe.[1] *Vaiṣṇavī* is called *Durgā* (*Nārāyaṇī*)[2] but this is a different goddess from the *Vaiṣṇavī*, one of the *Mātṛkas*.

*Yogamāyā-Mahāmāyā* :

*Devī Bhāgavata* describes her as a lady in a very beautiful form, thin, and adorned with all ornaments. Her two hands are holding a noose and goad, and the other two hands are making signs to discard all fear and ready to grant boons. Her thighs are very beautiful, girdled with a gold-band with small bells pending and making sweet twinkling sounds. Her feet with anklets (ornament) making sweet sonorous sounds with twinkling bells. Her voice is exceedinly sweet and lovely. Her fore head adorned with the crescent of the moon and on Her head was glittering a diadem of jewels. Her lotus-face adorned with sweet soft smiles and with her three beauteous lotus-eyes, looking like *Indīvara* (blue lotuses). Her body of red colour is like the *Pārijāta* flowers and her linbs are marked with red-sandal paste. She is dressed in a red attire and is like an ocean of infinite mercy, wearing complete dress suited to happy interviews. She is incarnate of ever existence, intelligence and bliss[3] and is identified with *Bhuvaneśwarī*.

*Rādhā* :

She is the most beloved lady of the God *Kṛṣṇa*.[4] *Rādhā* is having eyes similar to the red lotuses.[5] She is lovely and eternal, looking always young as she is of 12 years of age. She is peaceful, calm and quiet. She is infinite and having no beginning and no end. She is called auspicious, well-endowed with all auspicious signs, prosperous and having the good fortune and good husband. She is the most beautiful as if all

1. Dbh. III.18.14, 20.
2. Ibid. VIII.1.22-36.
   Devī P. 30.209-10.
3. Dbh VI.5.50-55.
4. Ibid. IX.13.38.
   Nārada P. I.88.22.
5. Dbh. IX.13.79.

the beauties were concentrated in Her.[1] She is the better half of *Śrīkṛṣṇa*.[2] She is having facial beauty like the lustre of the moon of the autumn season.[3] She is of pure *Satva* quality.[4] She is the heroine of the *Rāsa Krīdā*, as well of the *Gopikās*.[5] She is said to be the *Parāśakti*[6] and is identified with all other forms of the *Parāśakti*.[7]

*Ekānaṅsā Devī* :

In the *Skanda Purāṇa* it is said that this *Devī* was created by *Brahmā* to help *Śiva* and *Pārvatī* in the destruction of the demons and is identified with *Umā*, *Gaurī*, etc.[8] In an another chapter we find that *Bhīma*, one of the *Pāṇḍavas* was not willing to worship her but afterwards he agreed to it.[9] She is the Mother of all the beings, power of all the gods. She is *Mahāmāyā* and is adorned by *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*. She is black in complexion like *Kṛṣṇa*, her brother.[10]

She is having four hands, and is living on *Meru* mountain.[11] She is having both fearful and *Saumya* forms,[12] She is always attached to *Viṣṇu*, and is also called *Bhīmā-Bhaginī*.[13] It is very strange to note that she gives eyes (eyesight) to the devotees.[14] She is also called *Catvarapriyā*, a deity[15] wor-

1. Dbh. IX.13.31-40.
2. Ibid IX.14-15.
3. Ibid. IX.39.5-7.
4. Ibid. IX 39.14.
5. Ibid. IX.50.18-37.
6. Ibid. IX.50.6-7.
   Brahma V.P. II.ch.1.
7. Dbh. IX.50.48-49.
8. Skanda P. 5. Avanti Khaṇḍa 12.1-33.
   The Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXXV, No. 3 (1959), p. 189.
   Devī P. 37.36.
   Varāha P. 170.39.
9. Skanda P. 1.2.65.1-90,
10. Ibid. I.2.65.34.
    Also I.2.65.2-4.
11. Ibid. I.2.65.61.
12. Ibid. I.2.65.59.
13. Ibid. I.2.6.5,85-90.
14. Ibid. I.2.65.60-61.
15. Ibid. I.2-65.59; 7.60.1-6.

shipped on the cross-roads, generally on Saptamis.[1]

*Śāntā* :

The all-auspicious *Devī Bhāgavatī*, with a beautiful face, calm and quiet appearance, appeared before *Bhagavān Viṣṇu* in the form of *Māhālakṣmī*, who is all of *Sattva Guṇa*. She was surrounded by Her *Vibhūtis*. Her smiling companions of the same age, decked with ornaments, wearing divine clothings, and holding each in their four divine hands, conch shell, disc, club, and lotus.[2]

*Mahālakṣmī* :

She resides on the thousand-petalled lotus. The beauty of her face excels the beauty of the autumnal full-moon. She is shining with splendour, looks very beautiful and lovely. Colour of her body is like the shining gold. She is having a charming form, chaste, ornamented all over with jeweled ornaments, and wearing yellow cloths. Always a sweet smile reigns on her lips and She bestows prosperity to all.[3] She sits in a golden chariot. The great *Tejas*, coming out of her body made manifest the earth. She is having peaceful appearance like the world mother.[4] She is *Vaiṣṇavī Śakti*, depicted sitting on the lotuses and is also identified with *Śāradā* having a nature of happiness.[5] She as the wife of *Viṣṇu* is called *Śrī*—the goddess of good luck and temporal blessings. A large number of her icons are found all over India, showing her wide spread worship.[6]

*Kṣemaṅkarī* :

According to the *Padma Purāṇa Kṣemankārī* is said to be the most powerful *Śakti* of *Sattva Guṇa*.[7] She is having a face like

1. Skanda P. 5. Avantī Khaṇḍa 19.1-5; I.2.65,60;
2. Dbh I.15.56-58.
   Skanda P. 3. Dharmāraṇya Māhātmyā 17.14.
3. Dbh. IX.42.8-11.
   Devī P. 37.39, 50 1.241.
   Shukla (DN)—Vāstu Shastra Vol. II. P. 311.
4. Ibid. IX.42.46-49.
5. Ibid. IX.42.51-64.
   Devī P. 50. 124-126; 113.
6. Basham (A.L) The wonder that was India, P. 312.
7. Padma P. I.35.1.
   Skanda P.6.115.1-31.

white lotus and large and good eyes, resembling blue lotuses. She is surrounded with divine maid servants and friends. Mounted on a throne the young maiden with blossoming breasts, decorated, with various types of flowers is worshipped by the people.[1] She is residing in *Devīpura* habitated by the girls, created out of the anger of *Devī*. The city is said to be full of beautiful mansions.[2] The goddess is the main support of the universe[3] and is declared as *Vaiṣṇav Śakti*. She is having 20 hands and holding the following weapons in a said order,[4] viz. Bow, sword, *Śakti*, arrows, *Śūla*, *Gadā*, *Cakra*, *Mūsala*, a gun, *Paraśu*, *Damarū*, *Ghaṇṭa*, *Śataghnī*, *Mudgar*, *Bhuśūndi*, *Pāśa*, banner, lotus—and was riding on a lion to fight with the demon *Mahiṣa*. As she gives protection and fulfils the desires of the devotees she is called *Kṣemyā* or *Kṣemakarī*.[5]

*Śaktī* :

*Śakti* is called in the *Skanda Purāṇa* as the Mother of the world.[6] She is all-powerful, cause of the world, both as *Upādāna* and *Kartā*. She is all its cause, creation and creator, the trinity which visualises the world.[7] She bestows her form to each and every devotee.[8] She is *Viṣṇumāya* and the veda, the mind of the people.[9] Whatever is there in the world is possessed of *Śakti*, and in reality there is no distinction between *Śakti* and *Śaktimān*,[10] i.e. *Viṣṇu-māyā* and *Viṣṇu*.

*Sudhadrā* :

Though, She is the lord of the world, She is *Viṣṇumāyā* as she is acting according to the directions of *Viṣṇu*, but at the same time, not separated from *Viṣṇu*.[11] She bestows everything auspicious to the devotees, and resides in their hearts. She is

1. Padma P. I.35.2-6.
2. Ibid. I.35.4-13.
3. Ibid. I.35.144-47.
4. Ibid. I.35.52.
5. Ibid. I.35.165, 190.
6. Ibid. II.2.27.58.
7. Ibid. II.227.53.
8. Ibid. II 2 27.54.
9. Ibid. II.2.27.55.
10. Ibid. II.2.27.56, 59.
11. Nārada P. II.55.66-67.
    Skanda P. II.2.27.52-63.

identified with *Lakṣmī*, *Gauri*, *Kātyāyanī*, *Bhadra Kālī* and so on.[1] She is the cause of *Mukti* as well as puts the people in binding.[2] She is all-yielding for her devotees and protects those who take refuge in her lotus feet.

*I lack and White aspects of the goddess* :

The Concept of the duality of light and darkness has impressed mankind, from times immemorial, and if joy and gladness have been associated with the former so have gloom and fear with the latter.[3] That is why the gods or goddesses became both friendly and inimical towards the human beings and were called either the gracious, or benign or *Saumya* deities while her other aspects were called *Raudra*, fearful and black.

This whole world is pervaded by the forms and incarnations of the goddess. Sometimes she is present in her very pleasing form.[4] The similar idea is also seen in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇā*,[5] The fair coloured and benign forms of *Śakti* are known as *Umā*, *Gaurī*, *Sundarī*, *Śivā*, *Kāmeśvarī* and so on. These goddesses are having very charming personality and graceful character. They always help the people to have all their desires achieved and treat their devotees with motherly affection.[6] These goddesses are worshipped with *Dakṣiṇācārī* system of worship and are offered vegetarian meal and *Naivaidya*.[7]

*Pārvatī* :

The ancient Mother-goddess of India, has always been a mountain goddess; and the most popular epithet applied to her being *Pārvatī*, literally, meaning a maiden pertaining to the mountain. Though she is mainly associated with the Himā-

1. Skanda P. II 2.27.52-55.
2. Ibid II 2.27.61:
3. Widgery, A.G., The Comparative study of religions, Baroda, 1922, p. 137.
4. Viṣṇu P. I.9.121.
5. Devī Mahātmya, 4.26.
6. Devī P. 17.29.31.
7, Ibid. 50.129-131.

layas, she is also associated, in her different aspects with other mountains like *Kailāśa*, *Vindhya*, *Mandara*, and *Nīlāchala*.[1] This mountain goddess with the lion as her mount, seems to be the Indian version of the ancient world mother goddess, i.e. a mountain goddess with the lion as her mount, traces of whom have been found in the coastal regions of the Mediterranean sea.[2]

From the days of the epics *Pārvatī* has invariably been associated with Lord *Śiva*, popularly as his consort[3] and philosophically as the dynamic or positive counter-part of the static or negative aspect of the non-dual supreme Reality. This inseperably related divine couple is popularly known as *Umā-Maheśvara*; *Hara-Pārvatī*' *Bhavānī-Śaṅkara*; and iconographically is depicted as *Ardha-nārīśwara*.[4]

The goddess *Pārvatī*, in Indian literature, is rarely depicted as blood-thirsty, terrible goddess bent on killing the demons.[5] Barring some descriptions in the *Purāṇas* where the epithets of *Pārvatī* & *Caṇḍikā* are combined, the goddess *Pārvatī*, si depicted as sweet,[6] lovely, and home-loving goddess, either as the darling of her parents,[7] or the maiden offering her love to *Śiva*,[8] and as affectionate mother to the people of the whole world.[9] We find her afflicted with poverty and distress in her domestic life, as well as along with her full majesty of wealth as *Annapūrṇā*[10]—(giver of food). She is the dancing

1. Varāha P. 17.68.
2. T. Moor: Hindu Pantheon, p. 151.
3. Devī P. 37.72.
   Varāha P ch. 22.
4. Vāmana P. 144 37.
   Raghuvaṁśa 1.1.
5. Śiva P. V. 45.68.
6. Ibid. 2.3,3, 26-28; 2 3.4.1-6.
7. Ibid. 2.3.7.4-7.
8. Ibid. 2 3.6.45.
9. Ibid. 2 3.5.21-29.; 2.3.6 19-21.
10. Ibid. 2 3.53 9-10.

partner of Śiva, as well as entering deep into the mysteries of *Yoga*.[1]

*Form* :

She is the goddess shining with lustre i.e. a condensed light of electricity, rising sun, and bloosming red flowers. She is having a charming personality, attracting the minds and eyes of the people, mounted on a *Simhāsana* (throne) made of gold and studded with jewels & covered by the serpent *Vāsukī*. On her forehead there is a shining piece of crescent moon, her hair are black, her face is well-decked with ornaments like *Kuṇḍalas*, paste of sandal wood is applied to her face and is reddened by rose and lipstick. She is having a very beautiful neck, smiling lips & face, bloosming breasts, three linings on her belly, beautiful four hands full of weapons and in *Varada* and *Abhaya* Poses. Her ring is made of Jewels and white girdle is made of gold and is making tinkling sound. She is clad in red silken garments and is in full make up. She is adorned by the damsels of the gods, *Yakshas*, sages, and the people, such is our goddess *Bhuvaneśwarī* also called *Pārvatī*.[2]

*Ś īmāta*[3] :

She is a benign form of *Śāntā Devī*, popularly known as *Śrīmātā*. She is said to be the daughter of *Brahmā*, and Her names *Kulamātā* and *Sthānamātā* are also popular.[4] She is having *Kamaṇḍlu* in her hand, decked with *Ghaṇṭā* and ornaments wearing an *Akṣmālā* around her neck, thus her form is very auspicious. Observing vow of virginity, she is to be propitiated with *Bhakti*.[5] She is identified with *Saraswatī* in dispelling the ignorance and serves the interests of the *Brāhmins*.[6]

1. Skanda P. 2.3.54.14-15, 55.38.
2. Ibid. 3.3.7.16-23.
   Matsya P. chs. 155. 158.
   Kālikā P. ch. 45.
   Śiva P. 5.47.19-30.
3. Skanda P. 6.144-147.I.2.65.95-106.
4. Skanda P. 3.Dharmāraṇya Māhātmya 17.11-38. 3.1.1-50.
   Ibid. 7.Arbuda Kh. 22.1-91.
5. Ibid. 3. 17.14-16.
6. Ibid. 3.17.13, 20.

*Durgā* :

In *Devī Bhāgavata Purana*, *Durgā* is said as *Viṣṇumāyā*,[1] but at the same time she is also said as *Śaivi Śakti*.[2] Etymologically She is called *Durgā* as she destroys the difficulties of her devotees. *Durgā* is called *Mūla Prākṛti*, and the creation, destruction and nourishment of the world; these three activities are ascribed to her, and she is called Mahāsarasvatī, Mahālakṣmī and Mahākālī.[3]

1. *Mahākālī* : She is holding in her ten hands the following weapons, viz. axe, disc. club, *Bāṇa*, bow, *Parigha*, spear, *Bhuśuṇḍi*, *Kapāla* and *Khaḍga*. She is having three eyes, decked with ornaments, having dark complexion though shinning, having ten faces and ten hands, and she is praised by *Brahmā* for the destruction of the demons *Madhu* and *Kaiṭabha*.[4]

2. *Mahālakṣmī* : Her complexion is like the rising sun. She is seated on the red lotus. She is described as the nature of Māyābīja (Hrīṁ). She destroyed *Mahiṣāsura*. She is having in her hands *Akṣa*, *Paraśu*, Club, *Kuṇḍikā*, Arrows, *Kuliśa*, Lotus, Bow, *Daṇḍa*, *Śakti*, Sword, *Charma*, *Ghaṇṭa*, and *Surāpātra*. She is depicted having 18 arms.[5]

3. *Mahāsaraswatī* : She is the destroyer of *Śumbha* and *Niśumbha* and Nature of *Vāgbīja* 'aim'. She is holding Bell, Pickaxe, *Hela*, Conch, Club, *Sudarśana*, Bow and Arrows in her eight hands. Her body is filled with everlasting existence, intelligence and bliss i. e. सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरम्.[6]

The goddess *Durgā*, the eternal world-mother, is depicted either as four armed or eighteen armed, fully provided with all the weapons. She is ornamented with garlands of pearls and jewels, decorated with various ornaments of gems and precious stones, and is wearing excellent heavenly clothings. She is endowed with all the auspicious signs, mouting on a lion, and holding a conch shell, wheel, club and lotus in her

1. Dbh. IX. 38.55.
2. Ibid. IX.50.54.
3. Ibid. IX.56.60.
4. Ibid. IX.56.65-67.
5. Ibid. IX.56.68-70.
6. Ibid. IX.50.71.72.

hands.[1] The *Varāha Purāṇa* describes her as a young virgin girl, having eight hands[2] while all the other *Purāṇas* describe her as a charming wife of *Śiva* and a benign goddess.

*Ambikā* :

When all the gods eulogised her, instantly the goddess *Ambikā*, full of youth and beauty appeared there out of sheer mercy. That extraordinary beautiful Bhagavati endowed with all auspicious signs and adorned with Divine clothings, ornaments, garlands and sandal paste, emerged from the mountain cave, Sweet-voiced like a cuckoo, and she gladly spoke to the *Devas*.[3]

When *Kālikā* emerged out of the body of *Ambikā*, the remaining deity was called Kauśikī.[4] This was the supremely beautiful form, looking splendid, decked with various ornaments and with a smiling face and along with *Kālikā*, she went to a pleasure garden riding on a lion.[5] She is depicted as ever ready for warfare. having weapons in her hands.[6] She is having very charming eyes,[7] tender and slim body and also possessed of eighteen hands,[8] equipped with various weapons. Making a sound of conch-shell,[9] She stays on the high peaks of the mountains.[10]

In the battlefield the demon *Śumbha* saw the Divine mother *Ambikā* standing before him, though looking very beautiful she was filled with the sentiment of fiery wrath. At that time, the large eyes of *Bhagavatī*, the most beautiful in the three worlds, naturally, looked more red due to wrath. She was having lovely features and looking very smart.[11] She is ever-young

1. Dbh. III 25.18-20.
   Bṛhaddharma P. I.31.63-64.
2. Varāha P. 28.25-27.
3. Dbh. V.22.43-47.
4. Ibid. V.23.1-2.
5. Ibid. V.23.5.
   Devī Māhātmya 5.89-93.
6. Dbh. V.24.29.
7. Ibid V.24.34-40.
8. Ibid. V.26.6.
9. Ibid. V.26.29.
10. Ibid. V.27.48.
11. Ibid. V.30.18-19.

and is possessed of all the personal qualities. She is equipped with all the weapons being the goddess of the warfare. She is decked with all the ornaments, the overall incharge of this world and is, worshipped by the gods, demons, human beings and she is of the habit of fulfiling their desires and makes them free from all types of fears.[1]

*Jagadambikā* :

*Devī Bhāgavata Puraṇa* says that on the ninth day of *Caitra*, there appeared a *Tejapunja*—shining like the millions of suns, in the presence of the gods and later on it was trasformed into a beautiful feminine form.[2] Her youth was just blooming and she was wearing all the various types of ornaments on the different parts of her body.[3] Her eyes were bright and red like the red lotuses, her nose elevated, lips very sweet, Her teeth were beautiful and hair very lovely. Her three eyes gave unparallell lustre to her face and She was wearing red garment. In her four hands, there was a noose, the goad, and the signs granting boons and dispelling fears, She is the Mother-Goddess i.e. the incarnate of unpretended mercy, the enchantress of all, sweet, and smiling.[4] She may be called *Ambikā* or *Bhuvaneśvarī* and she resides in *Maṇi Dvīpa*.

*Saraswatī or Śāradā* :

The *Saraswatī*, holding the *Veena* in her hand[5] is of white colour. She is of a smiling counteanance and is exceedingly beautiful, the lustre of her body overpowers that of the ten millions of Moons. Her garment is purified by fire, in her hands there are *Veeṇā* and a *book* & She is decorated with new and excellent ornaments made of jewels and pearls and whom *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśa* and the other Gods, *Munis*, Manus and the people constantly worship.[6] She is the goddess of

1. Dbh. V.31,19.23.80.
2. Ibid. VIII.31.26-31.
3 Ibid. I.12.38-39; VII.39.43; VIII 31.31 31·37.
4. Ibid. VIII 31.39-41.
5. Ibid. IX.4.71.
6. Ibid. IX 4 45.48.

speech and learning.[1] She is also called *Sāvitrī* and the Mother of the *Vedas*.[2] She is identified with *Brahmā* as well as with *Mūla Prakṛti*. She is having the form of lustre (*Teja*) and is most charming.[3] She has an autonomous role as patron of art, music and speech or learning. She has been the object of worship by the students, the writers, the scholars and the musicians from the very early times and her cult is still prevalent in India.[4]

*Jambvādinī Goddess* :

From the high-peaks of the mountain *Mandara*, the sweet scented juices flow down designated as *Jambu* river, flowing by the South of *Ilāvarṣa*. The *Devī Bhagavati* is pleased with this juice of that rose apple (*Jambu*) and is known by the name of *Jambvādinī*.[5] The Gods, the *Nāgas*, and tee *Ṛṣis* always worship with great devotion, the lotus feet of the merciful goddess, wishing the welfare of all the *Jīvas*. The mere remembrance of the name of the goddess destroys all the diseases, and all the sins.[6] She is installed on both the banks of the river *Jambu*. If people recite her names like *Kokilākṣī*, *Karuṇā*, *Kāma Pūjitā*, *Deva-Pūjyā*, *Dhanyā* and *Gabhastinī* and worship her, they achieve their welfare, both in this world and in the next.[7]

*Dhāreśwarī* :

Form the mountain *Supārśva*, the five streams flow to the west of *Ilāvarṣa*.[8] The *Dhāreśwarī Devi* dwells there, fulfiller of the desires of the *Bhaktas*, highly energetic, of the nature of *Kāla* and having large faces, (*Mahānanā*) faces everywhere, worshipped by the gods is called the presiding deity of the woods and the forests all round.

1. Dbh. IX.4.75.
2. Ibid. IX.26.48-52.
3. Ibid. IX.26.79-84.
4. Basham (A.L.), The wonder that was India, p.312.
5. Dbh. VIII.6.4-5.
6. Ibid. VIII.6.6.7.
7. Ibid. VIII.6.8-9.
8. Ibid. VIII.6.13-17.

*Aruṇākhyā Devī* :

*Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* says that on the top of the *Mandara* Mountain, there flows a great river named *Aruṇodā* and the gods, *Daityas* and the kings always worship the great goddess named as *Aruṇā*, the destroyer of all sins, the fulfiller of all the desires, and the bestower of fearlessness. She is worshipped with various offerings and with lovely water of the river *Aruṇā*.[1] In ancient days, the kings and the rulers of the *daityas* worshipped her and obtained immense wealth and prosperity. She is generally prayed for health, freedom from diseases, and happiness.[2] She is named as *Ādyā*, *Māyā*, *Atulā*, *Anantā*, *Puṣṭi*, *Iśwaramālinī*, etc. and said to be the destroyer of the wickeds and giver of lustre and beauty and is remembered with cimmense devotion on the earth.[3]

*Śatākṣī* (*Śākambharī*) :

*Śatākṣī* is the same as *Durgā* and is also named as *Śākambharī*.[4] She is the lady of the universe, is having one hundred eyes. She is the ocean of mercy, and is ever ready with various weapons in her hands for the preservation of the universe.[5] Her colour is dark-blue like heaps of collyrium, eyes like the blue lotuses and, expended, hard breasts, regularly elevated, round and fleshy thighs. Having four hands, and arrows in her right hand, lotus in the under hand; great bow in her left upper hand and carrying vegetables, fruits, flower and roots with abdundance of juice, destroying hunger, thirst and fever in her left lower hand. She is the essence of all beauty, and is lovely, luminous like the thousand suns. Her countless eyes began to shed tears for nine nights constantly, and by that water, the people and the plants were watered.[6] During a faminine she gave food-grains and fruits to the people and thus was

1. Dbh. VIII 5 28-29.
2. Ibid. VIII.VIII.5.29a.
3. Ibid. VIII.5.30.
4. Ibid. VII.20.69,47.
5. Ibid. VII 27.33-39.
6. Ibid. VII.28.33-39.
   Devī Māhātmya-XI 48-43.
   Śiva P. 5.50.35-35.

called *Śākambharī*.[1] She also fought with the demon *Durga* and was helped by the goddesses *Kālikā*, *Mātangī* etc[2] viz., issued from her own body.

*Mangala Caṇdikā* or *Sarvamangalā* :

She is the same deity as *Durgā*[3] and is depicted as skilled in all the auspicious works and she herself is the most auspicious, as well as the bestower of all desires. It is said that She is worshipped on *Maṅgalvāra*[4] & was worshipped first by *Maṅgalā*, a king in the *Ikṣvāku* family. She is generally the *Iṣṭa Devatā* of ladies and this is why she is called *Maṅgalā Caṇḍī*.

*Maṅgalā Caṇḍī* is described sixteen years old, and ever youthful. Her lips are like autumnal lotus, colour is white like *Campaka* flowers, Her eyes resemble blue lilies and She bestowes the prosperity to her devotees. She is the light in this dark ocean of the world.[5] She is the presiding deity of prosperity and happiness, and is worshipped by the ladies on every Tuesday for the sake of prosperity and happiness.

*Kāmeśwarī* :

Another benevolent manifestation of *Devī* is *Kāmeśvarī*, worshipped by the left hand way and described as having the following form. Her complexion is like oily collirium; her hair is blue and glossy, She has six faces, 12 arms and 18 eyes, and on the crests of her six heads there are six half-moons like banners. On her neck and chest are garlands of gems, jewels and pearls etc, She is decked with all ornaments and She carries a book, *Siddha-Sūtra*, arrows, sword, *Śakti* and *Śūla* in her right hands and rosary, lotus, bow, *Abhaya* pose, in her left hands. She is of the following colours viz : yellow, green, black and multi-coloured. These successively rest on the north-east, east, south, west, north and the middle of her-neck, known respetively as *Maheśwarī*, *Kāmākhyā*, *Tripurā*, *Śiradā*, *Kāmeśwarī*, & *Chaṇḍā*, by her white, red,

1. Dbh. VII.28.46-47.
2. Ibid. VII 28 54-57.
3. Ibid. IX. IX.47.6.
4. Ibid. IX 47.3-6, 26-35.
   Devī P. 50.27-30. 37.I-2.
5. Ibid. IX.47.23-25.

yellow, green, black and multicoloured faces. With braided hair on each of her heads *Kāmeśwarī* stands with her smlling face on a red lotus, placed on a white corpse, which is again placed on a lion.[1]

This goddess in her *Siddha-Kāmeśwarī* form[2] is described as having a yellowish red complexion along with the sun and the moon swinging under her ears. Her complexion is rendered unsteady by her ornaments of gold and gems. She possesses three eyes and two hands, one in the *Abhaya-Varada* pose and the other extended with a rosary. The best of gods and men bow to her. In her *Sarva-Kāmeśwarī* pose, she is depicted as a beautiful maiden with the colour of the morning sun, but standing on a dead body.

This goddess resembles a red lotus and remains on a red lotus too. She possesses a fresh and youthful body with the locks of her hair let loose, and also a good necklace. She stands on the chest of a corpse and her breast is charmingly heaved up. Her garment looks like the morning sun; grants ample prosperity, and is having a smiling face; her hair; nails and teeth beautiful; and stands in a bent pose like the half-moon. She likes very much the *Yonimudrā*; and is capable of moving with the wind, but she remains at a particular place according to her promise.

*Kāmākṣā* :

On the top of mountain *Hemakūṭa* there is a place where the goddess is called *Kāmākṣā*[3] and is said to be the bestower of all the aims of life viz. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*. She is depicted very compassionate to her devotees and removes all their troubles and difficulties. She is described as follows:—She is having five faces, four hands holding, *Pāśa*, *Aṅkuśa* bow and arrows. She is shining like croses of suns, she is affectionate like mother and touches the bodies of her devotees with her hand, and is surrounded by the *Bhaktas*. She is

1. Kalika P. 68.16-27.
2. Ibid. 86.51-53.
3. Padma Purāṇa V.12.53-67.

the creator, the destroyer and the preservor of the universe in which she is pervaded.[1] According to *Nārada Purāṇa*, *Devī* appears before her devotees even in fearful forms.[2]

In the *Kālika Purāṇa* descriptions of deities together with their modes of worship are elaborately given. The writers of Indian iconography have so far taken very little notice of the materials available in the *Kālikā Purāṇa*. The iconographical details in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* differ greatly from other texts. It may be presumed that in Assam certain gods and goddesses combined in their form regional characteristics and *Kālikā Purāṇa* probably recorded these local traits in their forms.[3]

*Mahāmayā* :

The dominant goddess referred in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* is the *Māhamāyā* or *Ambikā*.[4] She is the universal Mother (*Mūla Mūrti*) and all other goddesses are only her different manifestations. Other *Purāṇas* also mention her as an important goddess.[5]

The complexion of her body is like that of the red lotus and her tresses hang freely down; she dazzles with swinging gold earrings and wears three crowns set with gold and gems; she is nicely decorated with 3 eyes, white, black and purple, with cheeks like the moon at dusk and with restless eyes, her teeth resemble a series of the seeds of a ripe pomegranate and she looks bright with a pair of excellent eye-brows. Her (red) tongue resembles the petal of a *Bandhūka* flower and her nose shines like a *Śirīṣa* blossom. Her voice is like the sound of a conch, her eyes are large and in brightness equals that of the crore of suns. The four-armed deity is naked and her breass are high and swelling; in her upper right hand she holds a sword, and in the lower a *Siddha Sūtra*, her left hands are in *Abhava* and *Varada* (boon-giving) poses. Her naval is low and she seems to be graceful with a slim waist; her thighs resemble and

1. Padma P. V.13.11-13; 18-34.
2. Nārada P. II.69.2-5.
3. Gode (P.K.), Commemoration Volume. part III. p.
4. Kālikā P.62.55-71.
5. Sūta Saṁhitā 10.29, 31, 34, 42.
   Śiva P. 5.45.47-50.

hanging thumb of an elephant, with the ankle-joints sunk (under healthy muscles) and with nice (fine-toed) feet; she sits nicely in typical posture, firm in meditation, leaving closely upon a pillar of gems, looking at her vehicle, the lion, seated before her and frequently asking him the question, 'What do you want'. She is smiling and shining with all sorts of ornaments necklace of pearls, gold bracelets, armlets and so on, She is endowed with all good signs and never fading youth and is graceful in all her limbs.[1]

*The goddess Mīnākṣī* :

This appelation, *Mīnākṣī*, probably indicates that she has got beautifully large and long eyes.[2] The goddess *Mīnākṣī*—like *Pārvatī*, is the embodiment of the worlds kinetic energy and its supreme force. She transcends all other gods, including the trinity of the *Purāṇas*. With her power she also combines a great maternal tenderness—and is mostly called the Mother by the devotees.

The goddess *Mīnākṣī*, great mother, all merciful and all mighty keeps her eyes even open like a fish, because only then does the world exist and the creatures over whom she watches with a blend of infinite power and pity continue to live.[3] The name under which she is honoured at *Madurā* recalls to the informed worshipper the basis of his deepest devotion.[4]

The *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* says that on the top of the *Kumuda* mountain the river *Kāmadughā*, originates and comes gradually to the north of *Ilāvarsha*.[5] The *Bhagavatī Mīnākṣī* is worshipped here by the gods and the *asuras* both. The deity clothed blue, of fearful countenance and ornamented with hair of blue colour, fulfills all desires of the people.[6] The

1. Kālika P. 61-11-20.55.25-36.
2. Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 67, P. 209.
3. Saundarya Laharī V.55.
4. Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 67, p. 214.
5. Dbh. VII.6.18-20.
6. Ibid. VII.6.20-21.

people worship, remember and praise Her by the names viz. *Matta-Mātaṅga-Gāminī*; *Māra Pūjitā*, *Māna Priyā*; and *Mayūra-Vara-Śobhāḍhyā*. The devotees are honoured by the deity *Minalochanā* and the *Parameśwarī* and they get all sorts of happiness.[1]

*Bhrāmarī Devī* :

The goddess surrounded by black bees is called *Bhrāmarī*.[2] She is the world mother, the auspicious Devī, and resplendent with the brilliance of ten million suns and looking beautiful like crores of *Kāmadevas*.[3] Her body is anointed with variegated colours etc. She wore a pair of clothings, a wonderful garland suspended from her neck. Her body was decked with various ornaments and in the first of her hands there are groups of black bees. Her hands are granting boon and *Abhaya* to the devotees. She is surrounded by the millions of black bees singing the Hrim Mantra.[4] *Bhrāmarī* is identified with the goddesses viz. *Kālikā*, *Nīlā Sarasvatī*, *Ugra Tāra*, *Mahogrā*, *Tripurasundarī*, *Bhairavī*, *Mātaṅgī*, *Dhūmāvati*, *Chhinnamastā*, *Śākāmbharī* and *Raktadantikā*. She is also said to be residing in *Maṇidvīpa* and is ascribed with the act of destruction of the demons viz : *Śumbha* and *Niśumbha*, *Raktabīja*, *Dhūmralocana*, *Vṛtra*, *Caṇḍa*, *muṇḍa*[5] and other demons.

*Kātyāyanī* :

In Skanda Purāṇa she is said to be leading the unmarried life and residing in the *Vindhya* range. The action of killing *Mahiṣāsura* is accrued to her.[6] She is identified with the *Kṣemaṅkarī* goddess in *Saurāṣṭra*[7] and is called *Chamatkārī Durgā*, installed by and worshopped the king *Chamatkāra* in his city.[8]

1. Dbh VIII.6.22-24.
2. Ibid. X.13.99.
3. Ibid. X.13.80-83.
4. Ibid. X.13.90-92.
5. Ibid. X.13.93 94.
6. Skanda Purāṇa 6.115.21-22.
   Shukla (D.N.) Vastu Shastra Vot. II P, 317.
7. Ibid. 6.115.30.
8. Ibid. 6.64.1-4.

She is said to be born of anger of the gods and was named *Kātyāyanī*.[1] She was having 12 arms, and is holding the weapons given by gods,[2] Mounting on a lion given by *Gaurī* she went to Vindhyas, habitated by the non-*aryan* tribes like *Kirātas* etc. to kill demon *Mahisa*. She was worshipped by these tribes and her army was constituted of these.[3] She is also named as *Vindyavāsinī* and is depicted sitting on the corporal body of *Mahiṣa*.[4] She is said to be a war goddess, and is worshipped mostly by the warriors at the time of actual fight.[5]

In the *Matsya Purāṇa* the goddess is depicted having ten hands and taking the forms of the three gods—*Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Śiva*. She is having matted hair, disc or moon on her forehead, three eyes, lotus-like beautiful face, in her blossoming youth, decked with all the ornaments and in good dress. She killed demon *Mahiṣāsura*. In her right hands are *Triśūla*, sword, disc, sharp arrow and *Śakti*, while in her left hands are *Kheṭaka Chūrṇachapa*, *Paraśu*, *Ghaṇṭā* and *Pāśa*. She is shown mounting on the trunkless dead body of *Mahiṣāsura*. She is riding on a lion placing her right foot, while left is placed on *Mahiṣa*. Thus our goddess *Kātyāyāni* is praised and worshipped by the gods and the sages.[6]

*Vindhyavāsinī* :

This goddess born of *Yaśodā* destroyer of the demons and *Kaṅsa*, called the sister of *Kṛṣṇa* and *Baladeva* and is identified with *Indrāṇī*, *Pārvatī*, and *Vaiṣṇavī* etc.[7] From *Yaśodā* she was born and was brought to *Mathurā* by Vasudeva in exchange of *Kṛṣṇa* born of Devaki. As *Kaṅsa*

1. Skanda P. 6.116.12-13.
   Devī Māhātmya II.9-10.
2. Ibid. 6.116.14-18.
3. Ibid. 6.118.2.
4. Ibid. 6.118.75-77.
5. Ibid. 6.118.78.
6. Matsya P. 259.55-69.
7. Ibid. 5.Avanti Khaṇḍa 66.4-6.
   Devī P. 37,11.

knew that a child has been born in the house of *Vasudeva*, he came there snatched the child from Devaki and threw her on a stone. She appeared then as *Devī* having eight hands, and holding weapons.[1] She is the presiding deity of *Devī Purāṇa*. She incarnated on the *Vindhyas* with a lion as her *Vāhana* to kill the demon *Ghora*. She is the young damsel of the beautiful form.[2] She killed demon *Ghora* also called by the name of *Mahiṣā*.

In *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* it is said that all the *Manus* worshipped this goddess to attain the power of creation.[3] *Manu Swāyambhuva*, the first, was devoted to *Vindhyavāsinī*, the form of *Devī* residing in the *Vindhyas*. It is also very interesting-when the *Purāṇa* says that *Agastya*, the staunch follower of *Śāktism*, who was the resident of *Kāśī*, went to the *Vindhyas* at the request of the gods and it was he who installed *Devī* in that region. *Agastya* went southword and crossing the *Malaya* Mountains, and *Śrīśaila* he constructed his cottage in the vicinity of that *Malaya* Mount.[5]

*Vindhyavāsini* is one of the *benign* forms of *Devī*. She is called the bestower of the desires and of the Motherly affection to the devotees.[6] She bestows the good fortune.[7] She is the protectress of the world, full of all auspiciousness, and inner controller of the beings.[8] World is Her form[9] and Her power is always useful. Being worshipped by Manu she went to the *Vindhyas* and is called the younger sister of *Kṛṣṇa* as well as is worshipped by all.[10]

1. Skanda Purana 3.27.50-62.
2. Devī P. chs. 5-8, and 13-21.
3. Dbh. X.1-13.
4. Ibid. X.7.21.
5. Ibid X.7.1-21. 6.4.
6. Ibid. X.1.4.
7. Ibid. X.1.10.
8. Ibid: X.1.15-16.
9. Ibid. X.1.13.
10. Ibid. X.2.2-6.X.6.4.

*Gaurī Pañch-Piṅdikā* :

*Gaurī* is described as made of five *Mahābhūtas* and there are two accounts in this regard.[1] One is saying that *Gaurī* herself took to penance worshipping an image of *Gaurī* to obtain complete love of Śiva.[2] Second account tells us that she was worshipped and installed by *Lakṣmī*.[3] Worship of the clay image of *Gaurī* identifying it with five *Mahābhūtas*, the constituent of the world, is said to be the worship of the world.[4]

1. According to first account she is to be worshipped on bright 3rd day of all the months for one year.[5]

2. According to second account she is to be worshipped in the month of *Jyeṣṭha* only.[6]

*Kelesvarī* :

This is a new name of Devī, heard only in *Skanda Purāṇa*.[7] She killed demon *Andhaka*.,[8] and is said an incarnation of *Devi*. God *Śiva* propitiated her by offering oblation of his own blood in fire and She was pleased. It is said that she was also worshipped by *Andhaka* in order not to meet death. Demon actually was not killed but was assimilated in the *Gaṇas* of *Śiva*. She is worshipped on 8th and 14th day with meat and blood.[9] She is always ready to help the gods. as the Supreme Lady in the world, and full of compassion for the devotees. She is the Embodiment of highest *Śakti* and is identified with *Śrimātā*.[10]

*Gojapā goddess in Kājeśa*[11] :

She is described as mounting on a lion, drinking wine,

1. Skand P. 6.127.1-67; 6.128.1.51, 6.167.1-60; 6.168.1-25.
2. Ibid. 6.127r37.
3. Ibid. 6.167.1-60
4. Ibid, 6.167.12-13.
5. Ibid. 6.128,42.
6. Ibid. 6.167.2.
7. Ibid. 6.144.1-40; 6,145.1-98; 6.146.1-30. I.2.65-106.
8. Ibid. 6.145,11.
9. Ibid. 6.145.80, 6.146,25.
10. Ibid. 6.144-147.
11. Ibid. 3.16.11-13

and holding the various weapons in her hands. She is clad in red garments. She, is the young maiden with blossoming youth, having a lustre on her face and intoxicated and eyes, protects all the beings.

*Goddess Ānandā* :

An incarnation of *Śakti*, *Ānandā Devī* protects the interests of the higher strata of the society.[1] She is of a divine origin, and is decked with ornaments of gold. Being clad in white silken garments, mounting on a lion, having four hands, bearing the mark of half moon on her forehead, and ornamented with garlands, she appears in her full blossoming youth. She is holding in her hands a rosary, sword, bow and arrows. She looks divine in her dress, make up and personality, such is description of our *Ānandā Devī*, an embodiment of *Śātvikī Śakti*.[2]

*Śītalā Devī* :

The *Nārada Purāṇa* recommends the worship of the goddess, *Śītalā*[3]—a nude goddess, mounting on ass. She is holding *Kalasha* and *Mārjanī* in her hands, and is able to undo the actions of *Viṣphoṭakas*.

According to the *Skanda Purāṇa—Śītalā* is the presiding deity of diseases and is worshipped for the good health of the children.[4] She is worshipped as a deity, who removes the pangs of sorrows or pains. If the children go to see the goddess they become free from diseases. Offering of camphor, sandal, Kasturi, flowers, edibles in *Naivaidya*, and movement of peacocks, is prescribed. The worship is prescribed to be pe formed either on *Aṣṭamī* or *Navamī* of *Śukla Pakṣa*.[5]

*Ṣaṣṭhī* :

Etymologically She is said to be the sixth part of *Prakṛti*

1. Skanda P. 3.16.20-21.
2. Ibid. 3.16.21-24.
3. Nārada P, I.118.95-99.
   Bhaviṣva P. Pratisarga Parva 4.3.54.
   Ibid. 5.Avanti Khanda.13.I.5.
4. Skanda P. 7.134.2.
5. I bid. 7.135.1-7.

and is the same as *Devasenā*, wife of *Skanda*,[1] and was worshipped first on the earth by *Priyavrata*. The Goddess *Śaṣṭhī* is a guardian deity of the children[2] and is one of the sixteen *Mātṛkās*. She is the *Māyā* of *Viṣṇu* and bestows sons to all. She also bestows longevity to the children and is always engaged in their preservation & maintenance.[3]

Sitting in an aerial car, white as crystal, encircled with woven silken cloth—she looks very lovely in appearance and her colour is like that of white Champaka. She is always youthful, smiling, adorned with jewels and ornaments, ever gracious to show favour to her devotees.[4] She is in her own words, the mind-born daughter of *Brahmā*[5] and Her concept is full of compassion just like a mother for her children.[6]

The goddess *Ṣaṣṭhī* is regarded as a protectress of infants, and has the just opposite character to goddess *Hāriti* who is considered in Tantric sects as a stealer of the children. *Śaṣṭhī* is taken to be the presiding deity over the function of 6th day of the child's birth and so her name is very appropriate as well as much significant. The worship on the 6th day of the child's birth is an old ceremony and was in vogue in the past. Probably the worship of *Śaṣṭhi* has been continued in Eastern part of India and is still common in Bihar and Bengal.[7] The images of *Śaṣṭhi* are found generally in the Eastern and the Northern part of India.[8]

*Goddess Manasā* :

A female deity named *Manasā*—the snake goddess, is popularly worshipped by the Hindus so that they may remain safe. This goddess occupies a some what indefinite position in the Brahmanical pantheon. Her name is not found in earlier literature and attempt has been made to give an explaination

1. Dbh. IX.46.27,4
2. Ibid. IX.46.6.
   R.C. Hazra—Studies in the Upa-purāṇas, Vol. II, p. 323.
3. Dbh. IX. 46. 4, 6.
4. Ibid. IX. 46.16-21.
5. Ibid. IX. 46 25.
6. Ibid. IX.46 58-67.
7. Several images of Śaṣṭhi have been found in Bihar and Bengal. Epigraphica Indica, Pls. LXII-LXIV.
8. Archaeological Survey of India, Vol. II. p. 124.
   Archaeological Survey of Mayūrbhanj, p. 38, PL. XV.

of her name in the mediaeval literature. N.K. Bhattaśali is inclined to identify her with the Buddhist snake-goddess *Jānguli*[1] (goddess of wildness). *Manasā* appears to have been imported into Bengal from South India. The *Manasā* cult in Bengal obtained a sound footing during 11th and 12th centuries A.D,[2] and the large number of *Manasā* icons[3] found in Bengal support the above statement. Four-armed Bronze images of *Manasā* having a child in her lap have also been unearthed at Pahārpur.

In the Purāṇas she is depicted as deity of the Nāgas.[5] According to the *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* she is said to have fought with *Dhanvantari* to safeguard the interests of the *Nāgas*. *Dhanvantari*, an āryan physician was not in a mood to accept her in Āryan pantheon, but guided by *Śiva* and *Brahmā* he hesitatingly submitted before her.[6]

The goddess *Manasā* is called *Jagadgaurī*[7] as well as *Jñānarūpinī*. The goddess though related to *Śiva*, is a *Vaiṣṇava* goddess also.[8] Here it is very strange phenomena that she is called simultaneously the daughter as well as the wife of *Śiva* [9] Geneologically—she is the daughter of *Kaśyapa*, sister of *Vasūki*, the king of *Nāgas*, the wife of sage *Jaratkāru* and the mother of *Āstika*, who saved the Nāgas from the sacrifice of *Janamejaya*.[10]

Her form is described as a benign one, 'Having a charming personality, shining with lustre of youth, having a smiling face, clad in silk, decorated with ornaments, and riding on a *Nāga*, She is called the supreme deity of the Nāgas.'[11]

1. Iconography in Dacca Museum. p. 221,
2. Ibid. p. 224.
3. Epigraphica Indica, School of Med. Sculpture, p. LXIV.
   Iconography in Dacca Museum, pls LXXIIb and LXXIII.
4. Archaeological Survey Memoir. no. 55, pl. 38.
5. Brahma V. P. 4.51.60.
   Ibid II.35.1-21: II.46.1-147.
   IX.47 39-58; IX.48.145.
6. Brahma V. P. 4.51.1-72
7. Ibid. 4.51.15.
8. Dbh. IX.47.52.
   Brahma V. P. 4.51.56.
9. Ibid. 4.51.64.
10. Ibid. 4.51.55, 56.
    Dbh. IX.47 50, 49.
11. Brahma V.P. 4 51.58-60.
    Dbh. IX. 48;131-132.

She is always helpful to her devotees and dispels all their sins, fears and calamities.[1] She is considered as full of knowledge and disclosing the helms of knowledge to her devotees.[2] She is ascribed with one special epithet, *Viṣahari* i.e. the remover of the poison from the body, special.y the snake poison.[3]

*The Ugra Incarnations of Śakti* :

These incarnations of the goddesses are by nature black and dreadful, and encompassed by the symbols of destruction. Two hands of all these divinities, seem to be emyloyed in the work of death or destruction, and one of the other hands is pointing downwards, alluding to the universal havoc which surrounds them, while the other pointing upwards, seems to promise these generations of nature by a new creation.[4]

These goddesses are always performing fearful, and war-like actions, killing the awful enemies of the humanity at large, and safeguard their devotees interests.[5] These are mostly worshipped at the time when one requirs to harm his enemies. These deities are very fond of meat, wine and *Bali*, an essential feature of their worship. Their forms are very fearful and represent the *Ugra* aspect of *Śakti*.

*Kālī or Bhadra Kālī* :

The body of *Pārvatī*, when *Kauśikī* was created out of it, was transformed and turned black and became popularly known as *Kālikā* or *Kālī*. Her terrible black appearance increases the terror of the demons as she is known as *Kāla Rātri*, the night of destruction at the end of the world, but she is also identified with *Durgā*, the fulfiller of desires.[6] She is always ready to fight with demons along with *Durgā*[7] and *Kālikā* and is having *tawny*-eyes[8] as well as fond of war (*Kalahapriyā*).

1. Brahma V.P. IV.51-59.
2. Dbh. IX.47.53.
3. Ibid. IX 47.47; 48 144; IX.1.72-74.
4. Moor (T.), Hindu Pantheon, p.150.
5. Devī P. 37.10, 71, 50.192.
6. Dbh. V. 23 3-4.
   Devī Māhātmya V. 88.
   Skanda P. 1.2.27-29; 1.2.29.40-51.
   Devī P. 37,14; 50.191.
7. Dbh. V. 23.8-9.
8. Ibid. V.25.59.

At another place it is said that the goddess *Kāli* came out of the forehead of *Ambikā*, when the latter became angry during the battle.[1] *Kālī* is wearing the tiger's skin she is said to be very cruel. Covering her body with elephants skin, wearing a garland of skulls, terrible, with a belly like a dried up well, mouth wide open, with a wide waist, lip hanging loosely, and having an axe, a noose, and dreadful weapons in her hands,[2] she looked very terrible like the night of dissolution. She has been depicted as removing the heads of the *dānavas* and drinking their blood also. The goddess *Durgā* named her as *Cāmuṇḍā*, because she killed the demons *Caṅḍa* and *Muṇḍa*.[3]

*Devī Bhadrakālī* is wearing the bloody red cloths and smears red sandal paste over her body. She is having eight hands and is surrounded by the goddesses named as *Ugradaṇṣṭrā*, *Ugra Caṇḍā*, *Kotrā* and *Kaiṭabhī*. She Dances, laughs, sings songs in tune, and is very jolly. She bids Her devotees discard all fear and terrifies their enemies.[4] Her tongue is terrible, lolling and extended to one *Yojana*. In Her eight right arms she holds conch, disc, mace, lotus, axe, skin, bow and arrows and in her left hands, she is holding the bowl-shapped human skull, trident (*Triśūla*), *Sakti* (special weapon), *Mudgara*, *Mūsala*, *Vajra*, *Kheṭa*, and a shield. She is having the weapons of all the important gods, viz. *Viṣṇu*, *Varuṇa*, the fire, *Nārāyaṇa*, *Gandharvas*, *Brahmā*, *Garuḍa*, *Paśupati*, *Parjanya*, *Maheśwara*, *Vāyu* and other divine missiles belonging to the gods.[5] She is surrounned by the *Bhūtas*, *Pretas*, *Piśāchas*, *Yoginīs*, *Śākinīs*, *Ḍākinis*, *Yakṣas*, *Kinnaras* and demons in countless number.[6] Here she is described mainly the war goddess having an army of non-āryan martial races. The *Śiva Purāṇa* says that *Bhadra Kālī* is having one hundred hands. She is clad in red, having a very jolly m ood, and gives pro-

1. Dbh. V. 26.39.
2. Ibid. V.26 40-43.
   Brahma V.P. III. 36.26-36.
   Varāha P. 26.48-54.
3. Dbh. V.26 65.
4. Ibid. IX.20.36-38.
5. Ibid. IX. 20.39-43.
6. Skanda P. 7.268.1-4.
   Dbh. IX.20.44-45.

tection to Her devotees.[1] The *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* describes her as having eighteen hands[2] and according to the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, however, she has sixteen hands only.[3]

The well known goddess *Bhadra Kālī*, having sixteen arms; and with a huge body, rests on the north shore of the *Kṣīrodadhi*. The complexion of her body is like that of the *Atasī* flower and her golden ear-rings dazzle; she wears three crowns provided with crescent moons on her matted hair; and a gold necklace along with a snake in her neck; she always carries in her right hands a lance, a disc, a sword, a conch, a shaft, a spear, a thunder bolt and a rod; and in her left hands she holds a *Kheṭaka*, a leather-shield, a bow, a noose, a hook, a hand bell, an axe and a mace. She shines with bright rows of teeth and three red eyes and stands by her lion, piercing a buffallo with her lance and placing her left foot on it. She is the supreme deity, who pervades the whole world.

The goddess *Kālī* wears a necklace of skulls and holds an upraised sword for destruction in the upper hand of her two left arms and in the lower one she holds the severed head of a demon and blood trickles down from the two corners of her mouth. These signs are indicative of universal death and dissolution. In this respect, we notice that the spectacle of *Mahākāla* and *Kālī* is similar to that of *Virātrūpa* of *Kṛṣṇa*, which *Arjuna* is said to have witnessed in the *Gītā*. Arjuna's wavering mind found tranquility only after beholding that form of the Lord *Kṛṣṇa*. Similarly the concept of *Kālī* produces the consciousness that everything is subject to death and destruction. Hence one entertains a feeling of *Vairāgya* and endeavours for obtaining salvation by dislocating one's mind from all the allurements of the worlds.[4]

*Tripura Bhairavī* :

Her form in the Purāṇas is described in the following manner :

She is having four arms, red complexion and wearing a red garment. Her right upper hands are shown in *Abhaya* and *Varada* poses. She dazzles like thousand suns, with three

1. Śiva P. 2.5.33.36-45.
2. Bṛhaddharma P. I.18.16.
3. Kālikā P. 60.115-122; 62.55-67; 63.89-98;
4. Bhagavadgita—XI.9-59.

bright eyes. She stands on a white corpse with a pleasing and smiling countenance. She is wearing all sorts of ornaments. She appears as becoming three-fold as she is wearing three garlands of skulls on her head, breast and waist. All her ornaments are three-fold, and her eyes are intoxicated with liquor and her lips are red.[1]

*Śivadūtī* :

According to the *Kālikā* and the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇas*, *Śivadūtī* is said to be born from the body of the goddess *Kātyāyanī* and she was sent as a messenger by *Ambikā* to the demon *Śumbha*.[2] She is worshipped both by the *Śaivas* and the *Śāktas*. *Śivadūtī* is to be worshipped either in the right or left hand ways but the right hand worship is considered to be more meritorious.

*Śivadūtī* is described in the following manner[3] :—

She has four arms, a corpulent body, and her complexion is as resplendent as a mass of vermillion. Her teeth are red, and she wears a garland of skulls; has a matted lock where shines a half-moon. She is adorned with *Nāgahāras* and *Nāga-kuṇḍalas*; and wears a garment of panther skin. She holds in her right hands, a *Śūla* and a sword and in her left hands a *Pāśa* and a *Charma*. She with a broad face and thick lips appears to be tall and terrible. She places her right foot on the chest of a dead body and the left root on the back of a jackal and is surrounded by hundreds of jackals.

*Dikkarvāsinī* :

She is having four arms, black complexion ; and she is adorned with a garland of skulls. In her right hands are a sword and a *Cāmara* and in her left hands she holds a knife and a pot. She has long matted hair and on her chest are garlands of Nagas; she had blood-shot eyes and puts on her waist black garments along with tiger-skin. She places her left foot on

1. Kālikā P. 74.90.94.
2. Ibid. 63.111-112.
   Devī Māhātmya VIII.23-28.
3. Ibid. 63.104-108.

the chest of a corpse and the right foot on the back of a lion.[1]

*Tripura Sundarī* :

She has been described in three different poses :

In her first pose she appears red like a mass of vermillion and she possessess three eyes and four hands. In her upper left hand she holds a flowery bow and in her lower left hand a book. In the right hand she holds *Akṣamālā*. She stands on a corpse which is placed on four other corpses. She has matted hair, adorned with a crescent moon. She is naked and has *trivali* (three-folds) on her waist. She is adorned with all ornaments and looks beautiful in all her limbs.[2]

Her second pose is described as follows :

Her complexion is like a *Bandhūka* flower. Her matted look is adorned with a moon. She is possessed of all good bodily signs and adorned with various ornaments. Her brilliance resembles that of the rising sun. She sits in a *Padma Paryanka* pose is decked with garlands of pearls and jewels. She has got developed breasts and charming three poses. She being intoxicated with drinks, delights the eyes with her spotless appearance, but sets up an agitation in the world by her presence. She has got three eyes and smiles when a *Yonimudrā* pose is shown to her. She is in the freshness of her youth and Her four arms are like lotus stalks. In her left upper hand she holds a book and in her right hand an *Akṣamālā*. Her lower left hand is in *Abhaya* pose and the lower right hand is in the *Varada* pose. She wears a garland which is suspended from her head, and reaches her foot. She stands resting on a *Kalpa* tree in the pleasure garden of *Kāmadeva* giving him delight.[3]

The third pose of the *Tripurā* is as follows :—

Her complexion is red like a *Javā* flower. She has unlocked hair and a beautiful face. She sits in an *Ardha Padmāsana* pose on *Śiva* who is lying as a corpse. She wears around her neck a garland of skulls along with red lotus flowers, reaching

1. Kālikā p. 83.80.34; 64-65.
2. Ibid. 74.100.
3. Ibid. 63.84-87; 67.56-62.

down to her feet. She has high elevated breasts and is naked. She has four arms; and in her right upper hand she holds an *Akṣamālā* and her lower left hand is in *Varada* pose; her upper left hand is in *Abhaya* pose and in the other hand she holds a book. She has got three eyes and a smiling face. She is almost tired of enjoying a stream of blood.[1]

The *Kālikā Purāṇa* considers the sixty-four different forms of *Sarasvatī* to be the manifestations of *Tripurā* and the white form of *Tripurā Bhiravī* is regarded as a pose of *Sarasvatī* who is also all white.

*Charma muṇḍā—an Ugra form of Devī* :

The goddess is called *Carmamuṇḍā* and having a fearful form.[2] She is having three eyes and is black in colour. She is fond of wine, meat etc., and is surrounded by the *Pretas*. She is seated on a corpse (*Śava-yāna-ratā*) and is holding in her large hands, a *Pāśa*, and a pot full of blood. While other adjectives describe her as lord of the Gods, and she is worshipped on *Aṣṭamī* and *Navami* while observing a *Vrata*. She is an eternal-supporter of the world. She relishes the music and dance. She is identified with *Kālarātrī*, *Mahāvidyā*, *Lakṣmī*, *Sāvitrī* etc. and is called better half of *Śiva*. She removes all the troubles of the devotees and therefore remembered in the beginning of every auspicious ceremony.[3]

*Śāntādevī* :

In the southern part of the country there is a *Devī* named *Śāntā*. She is decked in multi-shaded cloths and wearing a garland of wild flowers. She is having eight hands and a charming and handsome personality. She is Mounting on *vyāghra*, decorated with divine ornaments, praised by the gods—thus is the wife of Śiva. She is considered as an embodiment of *Ekānamśā Śakti* i.e. *Yoganidrā*, who made the demons *Madhu* and *Kaitabha* to be killed by the god Viṣṇu.[4]

1. Kālika P. 67.63-67, 70.68-69;75.73.
2. Skanda P. 6.54.20-28.
3. Ibid. 7. Arbuda Khaṇḍa 22.34.
4. Ibid. 3. Dharmāraṇya Māhātmya. 17.1-10,

*Mātangī Devī* :

It is said that she is originated from the *Tejas* emerging from the face of *Śrimātā*.[1] The mention has been made of a demon *Karṇāṭa*, who used to tease the *devas* and they approached *Śrimātā*. Who on their request took the form of *Mātangi Devī* to kill the demon *Karnata*.[2]

She is black in complexion, having fearful face, eyes reddened due to anger and intoxication. She is wearing the clothes of red silk and is having 18 hands, holding the various weapons as well as a pot, full of wine. She is shining with lustre and supported by *Srimātā*. She is said to be *Bhuvaneśwarī* and is riding on a lion, she holds *Triśūla* in her hand. She is depicted drinking wine in order to kill the demon *Karñāṭa*.[3]

She killed the demon on dark *Tṛtiyā* of *Māgha*. She is also worshipped by the newly wedded pairs to have prosperity, happiness and good relations in future life.[4] It is prescribed that at the time of marriage she should be worshipped and every year the worship should be repeated.

*Goddess Tārā* :

In the early mediaeval schools of Indian Art several female deities were worshipped by *Tāntric* believers. The most important deity is named *Tārā* who is described in the *Nālandā* Inscription[5] as a powerful goddess to dispel eight kinds of fear of the people. From 9th to 12th cent. A.D. numerous images of *Tārā* were prepared in Bengal and stone or bronze images have come to light,[6] from Bihar and Bengal. She is described in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* in the following manner.[7] The goddess is wearing the skin of a tiger and is sitting on a Bull. She is having ten hands possessing a *Triśūla*, *Khaṭvāṅga*, *Śakti* and lotus etc. She is having fair complexion and a charming face, and she is not a fearful deity like the *Tāntric Tārā*. It is

1. Skanda P. 3.1.18.57-58.
2. Ibid. 3.1.18.57-166.
3. Ibid. 3.1.18.58-62.; 137-143.
4. Ibid. 3.1.18.133; 144-166.
5. Epigraphica Indica XXI. p. 97.
   Devī P. 37.34.
6. Bhattasali—Iconography in Dacca Museum, Pl. XVII-XXI
   Sircar. D. C. The cult of Śakti and Tārā. P. 142.
7. Kālikā P. 52.133-135.

only her *Ugra Tārā* form which is described as fearful one.[1] The *Nārada Purāṇa* describes only her wild form.

Thus we have discussed the various incarnations of *Śakti* both benign and awful. Though there are numerous other incarnations, but they are considered not very important and so have not been included in our description of the incarnations of *Śakti*.

*Śakti-Pīṭhas* :

*Śakti-Pīṭhas* are the places of the pilgrimages, and are considered to be the favourite resorts of the goddesses, known variously as *Devī*, *Durgā* and so on.

The legend which seeks to explain the origin of the *Piṭhas*, is the well-known epico-puranic account of *Dakṣa's* sacrifice, interrupted by *Śiva's* or *Devī's* wrath. It offers a mythological explanation of the origin of the *Piṭhas*. The earlier versions of *Dakṣa's* sacrifice have nothing to do with the creation of the *Piṭhas*.[2] It was only in the later *Purāṇas* viz. the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, *Devī Bhagāvata Purāṇa*, *Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Bṛhaddharma Purīṇa*[3] and the *Tantras*, dated probably about the earlier part of the medieval period, that a new legend was engrafted to the old story simply for the sake of explaining the origin of the *Pīṭhas*. According to these *Purāṇas*, *Śiva* became inconsolable at the death of his beloved wife *Satī* and after destroying the sacrifice of *Dakṣa*, he wandered over the earth dancing in madness with *Satī's* dead body on his shoulder. The gods, anxious to free *Śiva* from his madness, made a conspiracy to deprive him of the dead body of *Satī*. Then *Viṣṇu*, at the request of the gods, followed *Śiva* and cut off the dead body of *Sati* by his discus and the places where pieces of *Sati's* dead body fell are denoted as the *Pīṭhas* i.e. holy seats or resorts of the Mother-goddess in all of

1. Kālikā P 63.61; 59-70; 82.76-81.
   Nārada P. 1.88,135-140.
2. Sirkar (D C.), The Śākta Pīṭhas, p. 5.
3. Devī Bhāgavata P. VII.-30.43.50.
   Kālikā P. Ch. 18.
   Mahābhāgavata P ch. 11.
   Bṛhaddarma P. 1.14.15; II,36.1-153.
   Brahma V.P. 4.48.25.

which she is represented and constantly lives there in some form with *Bhairava* or *Śiva*.[1] The idea of the association of particular limbs of the Mother goddess with the *Śākta Tirthas*—seems to be connected with that of the *liṅga* or *Phallus* Cult.[2] Just like the concepts of *Liṅga*, that of the *Yoni* and *Stana* of the Mother-goddess appears to be very old and shows the non-*Āryan* influence on the culture of the Indo-*Aryans*.

First of all in the *Tīrtha yātrā* section of the *Vana-parva* of the *Mahābhārata*, which is probably earlier than the rise of the Guptas—reference has been made to *Śākta Tīrthas* associated with the *Yoni* and *Stana* of *Śakti*. There are the *Yoni Kuṇḍa* at *Bhimā Sthāna* near the *Punjab* and on the hill called *Udyata Parvata*, and a *Stana kuṇḍa* on the peak, known as *Gaurīśikhara*, probably the peak of the Himālayas. Their exact location is not beyond doubt, still it is tempting to identify the *Gaurī Śikhara* with the peak of that name, placed by the *Piṭha nirṇaya* in the *Kāmārūpa* country. The *Bhimāsthāna* was situated on the *Karamar* not far from *Shahbazgarhi* in the Peshawar District of the North Western Frontier Province.[3] In the 7th century this holy *Tīrtha* was visited by the Chinese pilgrim *Hiuen Tsang*, and he pointed out the importance and the popularity of the ancient *Bhimā Tīrtha*.[4] Besides these the *Mahābhārata* mentions the following *Devī Tīrthas*. *Kāmākhyā Tīrtha*.[5] *Śrī Parvata*, *Kālikā Saṁgam*, *Śākambharī*, place of *Dhūmavatī*, *Śrī Tīrtha*, *Devī Tīrtha* and last of all *Mātṛ Tīrtha*.

*Number of Pīṭhas* :

The *Hevajra Tantra* and the *Kālikāpurāṇa* enumerate the

1. Dbh P. VII. ch. 30.
   Kālikā P. dh. 18.
   Bṛhaddharma P. II.40.10-38.
2. Sirkar (D.C.), The Śākta Pīthas, p. 7.
   Shukla (D.N.) Pratimā Vijñana, p. 161.
3. Sirkar (D.C.), The Śākta Pīṭhas, p. 9.
4. Watters—On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, I, p. 221, and Devī Māhātmya 12.50b-52a.
5. Mbh. III.82.105; III.85.119; 21-22. III.83.46; 51; III.84.56; 51; 13-18; 58.

following four *Pīṭhas*;[1] *Jālandhura, Odiyāna, Pūrṇagiri* and *Kāmarūpa*. These are in all the four directions as seats of the goddesses viz. *Kātyāyanī*. *Caṇḍī*, *Purneśvarī* and *Kāmākhyā*. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* mentions, in addition to these, three more *Pīṭhas* in *Kāmarūpa* country viz.

1. *Devī Kūṭa*; where *Sati's* two feet fell and *Devī* is called *Mahābhāgā* (*Devikotta* in the Dinajpur Distt. of Bengal).

2. A locality on the eastern border of Kāmarūpa where the navel fell and the *Devī* is called *Dikkaravāsinī*.

3. A locality on the borders of Kāmarūpa where the head fell and the *Devī* is called *Lalita Kāntā*.[2]

The number of *Śakti Piṭhas* is said to be 51 only, while works like *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*[3] say that these are 108 in number. These *Piṭhas* are scattered all over the country, from cape Comorin to the Himālayas on one side and from Assam to North West Frontier (Pakistan) on the other side. Now we will describe the *Śakti Pīṭhas* mentioned in the *Purāṇas*. The most important of these is *Kāmarūpa*, presided by the goddess *Kāmākhyā*—represented by *Yoni*. This *Piṭha* is mentioned almost in all the *Purāṇas* expect the list of 108 *Pīṭhas*,[4] which shows aversion towards the *Tāntric Śakti-Pīṭhas* of the mediaeval age.

A complete list of 108 *Śakti* places along with the 108 names of the goddess is formed for the first time in the Matsya

1. Hevajra Tantra, Seventh Patala, quoted by Bagchi, 'Studies in the Tantras' I, p. 38.
   Kālikā P. 18.42-44; 49-51;64.43-45.
   Prāṇa Toṣinī, p. 548.
2. Kālikā P. 18.42-51.
3. Dhh. VII.30.
   Shukla (D.N.) Pratima Vijñana p.161.164.
4. Dbh. VII.38.15-18.
   Bṛhaddharma P. II. 40,37.
   Garuḍa P. 81.5.
   Skanda P. 1.3, 2.17,13.

Purāṇa.[1] The same text has been quoted in the *Revākhaṇḍa* sub-section of the *Avanti Khaṇḍa* in the *Skanda Purāṇa*; in the *Sṛṣti Khaṇḍa* Section of the *Padma Purāṇa* and in the *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.[2] But all the other *Purāṇas* except *Devī Bhāgavata* do not mention the name *Śakti Pīṭha* or *Siddha Pīṭha*, and they only use the word *Tīrtha*.[3] In some cases there seems to be an attempt to trace *Śākta* influence not only in the *Śaiva* places but in the *Vaiṣṇava* holy places also.[4]

Besides these lists of the *Pīṭhas*—containing 51 or 108 names of the *Tīrthas*—the *Purāṇas* mention a large number of *Śakti Pīṭhas*. These have been popularly known in those times and some of them are still popular. In modern times many new *Pīṭhas* have arisen[5] to importance, while some of the older ones have been dropped. But one thing is certain that now a days the Tantric form of worship of the goddess is very rare in the *Pīṭhas*, and mostly we find the worship of puritans type i.e. nothing objectionable in it. Now we will give-below the names of the *Pīṭhas*, alongwith the names of the goddesses mentioned in the various *Purāṇas*.

*Names of the Pīṭhas* :

In this list the names of the places and the goddesses are given except the celebrated list of the *Pīṭhas* found in *Devī Bhāgavata*, *Padma Purāṇa*, *Skanda Purāṇa* and *Matsya Purāṇa* and later on we shall give the references only of those *Pīṭhas* which are found in some other *Purāṇas*.

1. Matsya P. 13.25-53.
2. Padma P. Sṛṣṭi Khaṇḍa 17.188-223.
   Skanda P. Avanti Khaṇḍa (Reva Khanda) 62.1-32.
   Dbh. VII.30. 53-86.
3. Matsya P. 13 54.
4. Bṛhaddharma P. I,14.33.
   Padma P. I.17.199-203.
5. See—Kalyan, Śaktyanka and Tirthanka (these describe a large number of Pithas in Modern, India).

| | *Pitha* | *Goddess* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Vārāṇasi | Visālākshī[1] |
| 2. | Naimiṣa | Lingadhāriṇī |
| 3. | Prayāga | Lalitā |
| 4. | Gandhamādana | Kārnākṣī |
| 5. | Mānasa | Kumudā |
| 6. | Ambara | Viśvakāmā |
| 7. | Gomanta | Gomatī |
| 8. | Mandara | Kāmachārinī |
| 9. | Caitraratha | Madotkaṭā |
| 10. | Hastināpura | Jayantī |
| 11. | Kānyakubja | Gaurī |
| 12. | Malaya | Rambhā |
| 13. | Ekāmra | Kīrtimatī |
| 14. | Viśveśvara | Viśvā or Vilvā |
| 15. | Puṣkara | Puruhūtā |
| 16. | Kedāra | Mārgadāyinī |
| 17. | The Himālayas | Nandā |
| 18. | Gokarṇa | Bhadra Kālikā or Bhadra Karṇikā |
| 19. | Sthāneśvara | Bhavānī |
| 20. | Vilvaka | Vilvapatrikā |
| 21. | Śrīśaila | Mādhavī |
| 22. | Bhadreśvara or Madreśvara | Bhadrā or Bhadreśvarī |
| 23. | Varāha Śaila | Jayā |
| 24. | Kamalālayā | Kamalā |
| 25. | Rudrakoti | Rudrāṇi |
| 26. | Kālanjara | Kālī |
| 27. | Mahāliṅga | Kapilā |
| 28. | Koṭa or Karkoṭa | Mukuteśvarī, Mangaleśvarī |
| 29. | Śālagrāma | Mahādevī |
| 30. | Śivaliṅga | Jalapriyā |
| 31. | Māyāpūri | Kumārī |

1. Devī P. 75.1; Dbh. VIII.38·32-33; III.25.41-44.
Skand P. I 2.47.1-104 mentions more than 50. Pithas in Kāshi I.2.70.1-17.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 33. | Santana | Lalitā |
| 33. | Sahasrāksha | Utpalākṣī |
| 34. | Hiranyāksha | Mahotpalā |
| 35. | Gayā | Mangalā |
| 36. | Puruṣottama | Vimalā |
| 37. | Vipāśa | Amoghākṣī |
| 38. | Puṇḍra Vardhana | Pāṭalā |
| 39. | Supārśva | Nārāyaṇī |
| 40. | Trikūta | Bhadra Suṅdarī or Rudra Sundarī |
| 41. | Vipula | Vipulā |
| 42. | Mānaschala | Kalyanī |
| 43. | Kotitīrtha | Kotavī |
| 44. | Mādhavavana | Sugandhā |
| 45. | Godāvari | Trisandhyā |
| 46. | Gangādwāra | Ratipriyā or Haripriyā |
| 47. | Śiva Kuṇḍa | Śivanandā, Sunandā |
| 48. | The bank of the Devika | Nandinī |
| 49. | Dvārāvatī | Rukminī |
| 50. | Vṛndāvana | Rādhā |
| 51. | Mathurā | Devakī |
| 52. | Pātāla | Parameśvarī |
| 53. | Citrakūṭa | Sītā[1] |
| 54. | The Vindhyas | Vindhyeśvarī[2] |
| 55. | The Sahyādri (Western ghats) | Ekavirā |
| 56. | Hariścandra | Caṇḍikā |
| 57. | Rāma Tīrtha | Ramaṇā |
| 58. | The Yamunā | Mṛgāvatī |
| 59. | Karavīra | Mahālakṣmī[3] |
| 60. | Vināyaka | Umā or Rūpā |

1. Devī P. 75.2.
2. Vāmana P. 18.21!
   Devī P. 75.1.
3. Matsya P. 22.76.
   Dbh. VIII.38.5.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 61. | Vaidyanātha | Arogā |
| 62. | Mahākāla | Maheśvarī |
| 63. | Uśnātīrtha | Abhayā |
| 64. | The Vindhyan cave | Amṛtā |
| 65. | Mandava | Māṇḍavī |
| 66. | Maheśvaripura | Svāhā |
| 67. | Chāgalaṇḍa Vegala | Pracaṇḍā |
| 68. | Amarakaṇṭaka | Caṇḍikā |
| 69. | Someśvara | Varārohā |
| 70. | Prabhāsa | Puṣkarāvatī |
| 71. | Sarasvatī | Devamātā |
| 72. | The shore of the sea | Mātā or Parā |
| 73. | Mahālayā | Mahābhāgā |
| 74. | Payoṣni | Pingaleśvarī |
| 75. | Kṛtasauca | Simhikā |
| 76. | Kārtikeya | Śānkarī |
| 77. | Utpalavartaka | Lolā |
| 78. | Śoṇa sangama or Sindhu Sangama | Subhadrā |
| 79. | Siddhapura | Mātā Lakṣmī or Umā Lakṣmī |
| 80. | Bharatāshrāma | Anganā |
| 81. | Jālandhara | Viśvamukhī |
| 82. | The Kiskindhā hill | Tārā |
| 83. | Deva dāru vana | Puṣṭi |
| 84. | Kāshmira | Meḍhā |
| 85. | The Himālayas | Bhimā[1] |
| 86. | Viśveśvara | Tuṣṭi |
| 87. | Kapāla Mocana | Śuddhi or Śuddhā |
| 88. | Kāyavarohana | Mātā |
| 89. | Śankhoddhāra | Dhārā |
| 90. | Piṇḍāraka | Dhṛti |
| 91. | candrabhāgā | Kalā |
| 92. | Acchoda | Śaktidhāriṇī |
| 93. | The Bena | Amṛtā |
| 94. | Badari | Urvaśi |
| 95. | Uttarakuru | Oṣadhi |

1. Devī P. 75.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 96. | Kuśadwīpa | Kuśodakā.[1] |
| 97. | Hemakūta | Manmathā[2] |
| 98. | Kumuda | Satyavādinī |
| 99. | Aśvattha | Vandaniyā |
| 100. | Viśravana | Nidhi |
| 101. | Śiva | Pārvatī |
| 102. | Among the gods | Indrānī |
| 103. | In the mouths of Brahmins | Sarasvatī |
| 104. | In the solar orb | Prabhā |
| 105. | Among the mothers | Vaiṣṇavī |
| 106. | Among the beautiful girls | Tilottamā |
| 107. | In the hearts of men | Brahmakalā |
| 108. | In the living beings | Śakti |

In Devī Bhāgavata we find another list of fifty one Pīthas which seems to be a list of more popular places. This list gives some additional names.

*Additional Pīṭhas* :

1. Śākambharī[3]
2. Mātṛ Tīrtha
3. Umā vana.
4. Umā kuṇḍa—in the Lohārgala region.
5. Mahā Lakṣmī—on Pārijāta Parvata.
6. Durgā—on Gaja Mountain.
7. Śītalā Tīrtha.
8. Yoginī Kuṇḍa—somewhere on the shore of the ocean.
9. Gaurī Tīrtha—on the southern bank of the river Narmadā.
10. Nīla Sarasvatī—in the country named China.
11. Jvālāmukhī—in Himāchala Pradesh.
12. Hingulā Devī in Sind.
13. Nīlāmbā—on the top of the Nīla mount.
14. Jambunadeśwarī—in Jammu.
15. Devī—in Śrinagara, Kāshmir.

1. Matsya P. 22.76.
2. Devī P. 75.1.

16. Guhya Kālī—in Nepal.
17. Bhavāni—in Tulajāpura, Mahārāṣtra.
18. Gāyatri—in Puṣkara.
19. Annapurṇā—in Kānchipura.
20. Mīnākṣī.

Following are the sacred Places to Devī—which are also included in the list of the Pīṭhas :

1. Mountains—

The Himālayas, Hemakūṭa, Vindhyāchala, Mohindra, Mahāsena, Citrakūṭa, Gopagirī, Veda Parvata—all are associated with *Śakti* worship.[1]

2. Rivers—Banks of the ocean, Gangā-sāgar Saṁgama, banks of the river Ganges, Sarasvatī, Godāvarī, Kauśikī, Triveṇī, Brahmanada, Yamunā, Narmadā, Gaṇḍaki, Gomatī, Chandrabhāgā, Vetravatī, Tāpti, etc.[2]

3. Lakes—Mānasa, Bindusāra and Acchoda.[3]

4. Regions—Puṣkara, Kurukṣetra, Dharmāraṇya, Prayāga, and Arbudāraṇya.[4]

5. Cities—Ayodhyā, Kāshī, Ujjayinī, Hardwāra, Dwārkā, Mathurā, Śrinagara, Kānchi Puram, Kāmarūpa, Jā landhara and so on.[5]

1. Brahma P. 25.47; Devī Māhātmya XI 48-49, Dbh. VII.38.70.
2. Ibid 112.1; Matsya P. 22.76.
3. Ibid. 108 27-29; Vayu P. 41-36
   Vāmana P. 35 29;34; 36.18-19; 57-58; 42 15.
4. Varāha P. 151 66-67.
5. Kūrma P. I.48 42-43.
6. Ibid. I.48.27 28.
7. Skanda P. II Ayodhyā Māhātmya 8.21-23.
8. Ibid. 7.8 .84.
9. Ibid 5.Revā Khaṇḍa 26.30.
10 Dbh. VII 38.13.
11-20 Ibid VII.38.5-30.
   Skanda P. 1.2.2.64.

1. Devī P. 75.1-2, Dbh. VI.12.100.
   Also See Hazra, Upa-Purāṇa Studies, Vol.II.p.67.
2. Dbh. VI.12.1-7; IX.34.85-87.
3. Ibid. VI.8.67-68; VI.12.10b-11a.
4. Ibid. VI.12.8-9.
5. Ibid. VII.38.3-30.
   Devī P. 44.3-11

Besides these lists there are some other lists of *Śakti Tīrthas* in[1] *Devī Purāṇa*—though it does not mention the story about their creation and the specific numbers. The *Purāṇa* praises very mnch the worship of *Devī* in those *Pīṭhas*.

The *Purāṇas* and the ancient Indian literature record the spread of *Śakti* worship in India. The people were so enthusiastic that in every village a temple of the goddess was constructed and it was anxiously visited by them.[2] *Śakti* was the only deity, whom the people liked very much and worshipped with great devotion.[3] They were busy in performing *Devī* worship with all details and constituents i.e.—*Homa*, sacrifices, *Navarātra* worship, recitation of *stotras* and *Mantras* Kanyā-Pūjana, Vratas and pilgrimages to the Śakti Pīṭhas and full devotion to the goddess, The cult was patronised even by the kings and the higher authorities.[4] All this goes to show that the *Śakti*-cult was a widely popular-cult in ancient periods and espesially in the *Purāṇic* period.

Thus the Śakti cult had a very long and popular career in India and at present also there are numerous living shrines where the goddess is worshipped in various forms. It also influenced the literary creations as well as the cultural trends in the country. Artistic activities throuhout the ages also prove the popularity of the cult.

1. Devi P. 39 2-25; 42.4-14; 44.3-11, 38·6; 77,4,11, also chs. 32, 38, 39.
2. Dbh III.25 40.
   Kālikā P. 60.23-45.
3. Ibid III.25.41-44
   Kālikā. P. 60.4-13.
4. Ibid. III.25.35.46.

## RÉSUMÉ

The cult of Śakti in India has been an offshoot of primitive and universal worship of the cosmic Energy visualised as the Divine Mother. This Divine Śakti has also been intimately connected with the Vedic culture as the three female divinities of the Ṛgveda namely Aditi, Uṣas and Sarasvatī have most probably developed into the Purāṇic concepts of the goddessess viz. Mahākālī, Mahā Lakṣmī and Mahāsarasvatī. This concept of Śakti, as we find in the Purāṇas, and in other literature is related more to the creative faculty, whereas, in the Tantras and in primitive beliefs, her destructive aspect, is elalorately described. In its origin, the Śakti cult as described in ancient Indian literature, is a combination of both the Āryan and the non-āryan.

In the Purāṇas and other ancient literature the superiority of the goddess is culminated in the form of Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. She is conceived of as the power of Brahman and is also identified with Brahman.

There is one fundamental belief in Hinduism about ihe all-pervading and all-transcending reality, which is the source and support of everything. This very reality has been visualised by the Śāktas in the form of Śakti. The non-dualistic character of the Male (Śiva) and the Female (Śakti) pervades the whole of the Purāṇic and ancient Indian literature and in order to create the phenominal world, Mahāśakti herself assumes the two forms of Śiva and Śakti.

Though the cult of Śakti is highly influenced by the Tāntras, yet the Śakti of the Purāṇas is comparatively simple in nature, and owing to its ceremonial and Dakṣiṇacārī character the cult was very popular among the masses in the ancient period and still it is a very popular cult in India.

Śaktism has made a very significant contribution towards the religious integration in those times of religious bigotism as she was conceived of both, as a Vaiṣṇavī Śakti for the Vaiṣṇavas and a Śaivī Śakti for the Śaivas.

Like the Vaiṣṇava faith, Śaktism also laid much emphasis on devotion (Bhakti) as the only means to realise the Absolute i.e. Parā Śakti. This is the only cult which assures the votaries, the protection from the natural calamities and dangers, and as well as the procurement of worldly luxuries and happiness; lastly it helps them in obtaining the identification with the ultimate Reality. By prescribing the pilgrimage to the Śakti-Pīṭhas, Śaktism has kept alive the consciousness of the religious and cultural unity among the citizens of this vast country. The study of the evolution of the worship of Śakti in India gives sufficient proof of the assimilative and unifying character of the ancient Indian religion.

The Śākta conception of the goddess broadly corresponds to that of the Impersonal Absolute Brahman of the Upaniṣads. But in the entire Śākta literature very little emphasis has been laid on the static aspect of the Absolute. It is the dynamic aspect of godhead—the active manifestation of a deity in the form of Divine Energy, with which the Śāktas are directly concerned. The Śāktas have transformed the Impersonal Absolute into a personal divinity—the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient Śakti, or a Divine mother—the source, support and end of the entire empirical universe.

Thus, we can conclude that Śaktism has been evidently prevalent in all the ages of our history, but became remarkably popular in the epico-Purāṇic period, i.e. Ist to 12th cent. A.D. and it is still enjoying a wide respect in all the sections of the society throughout the length and breadth of the countıy.

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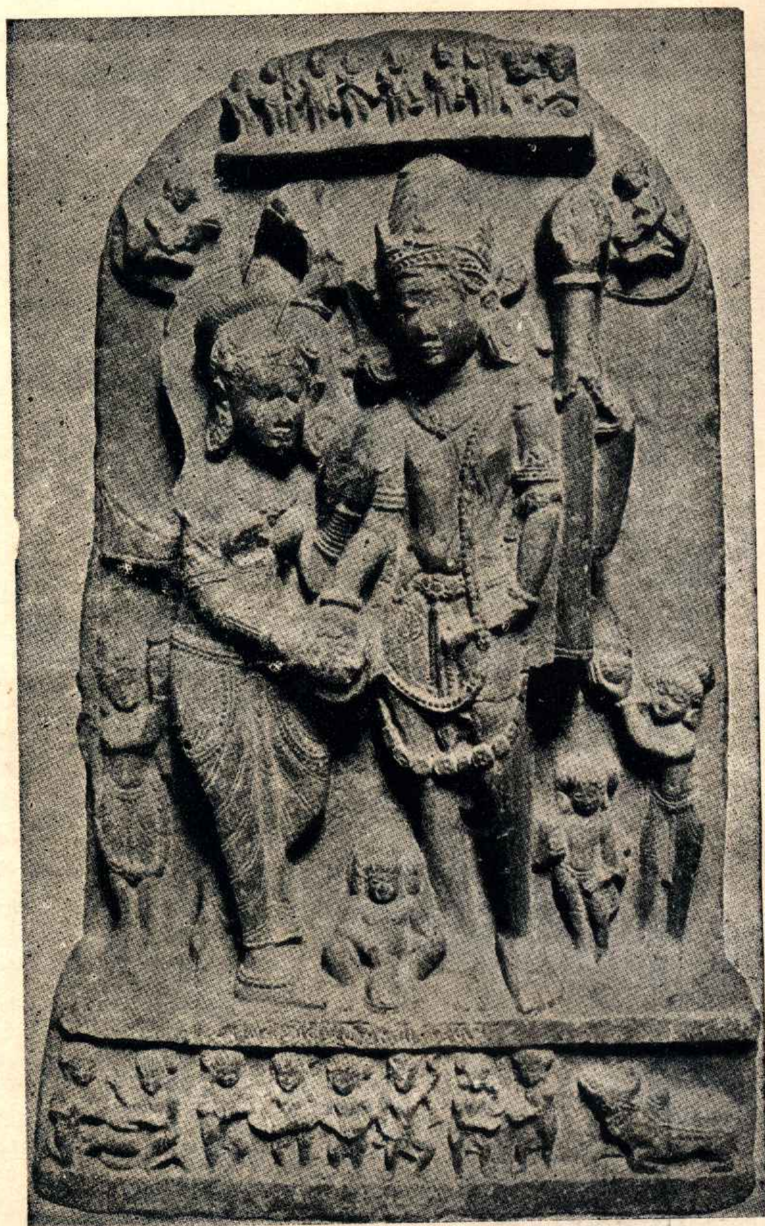


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